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Mercedes-Benz

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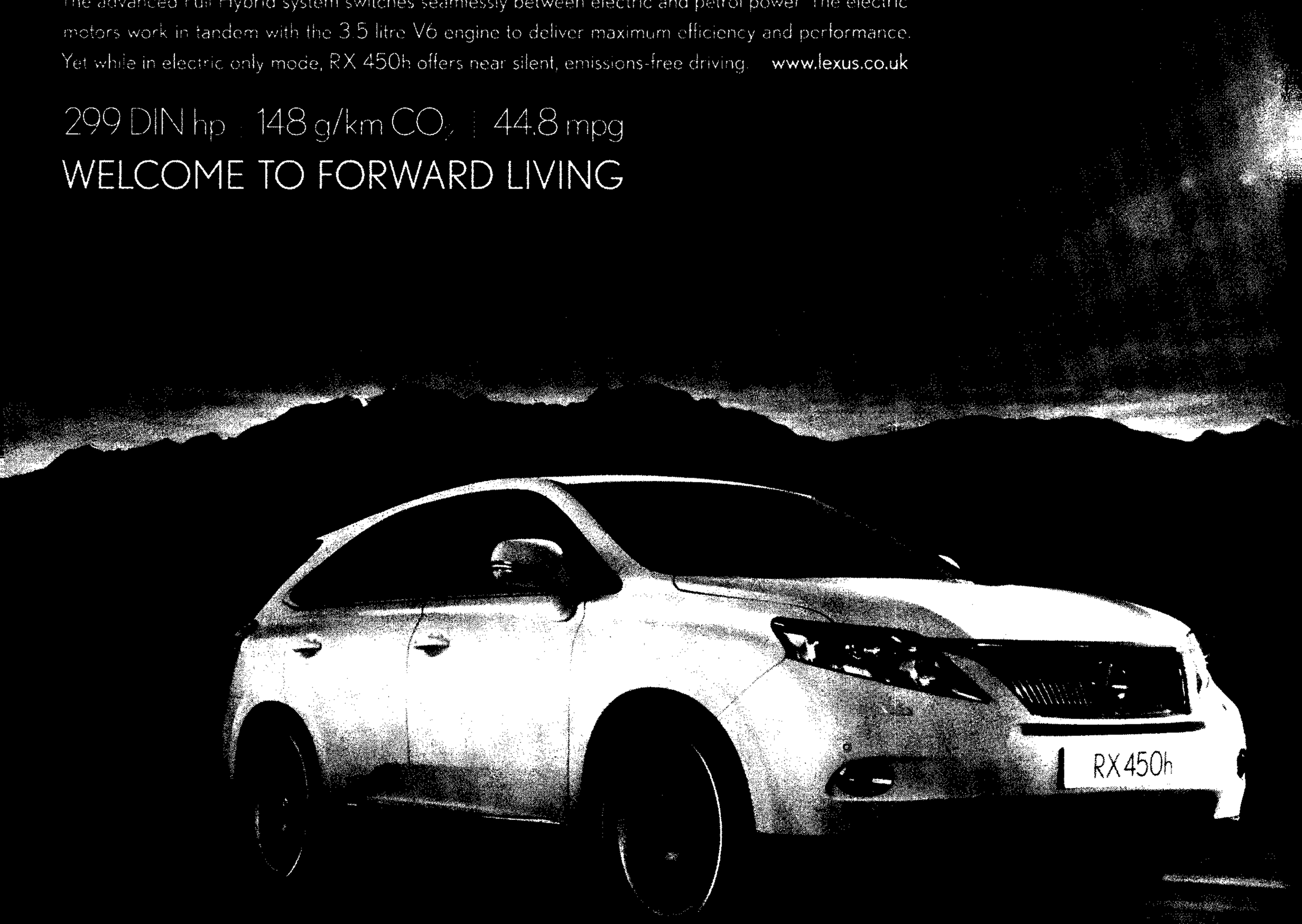


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# Gnome

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Yours,
Lord Gnome,
c/o The Royal Boat of Scotland,
Cannes, South of France.

*"You know me, I always read something trashy at the start of the holiday"*

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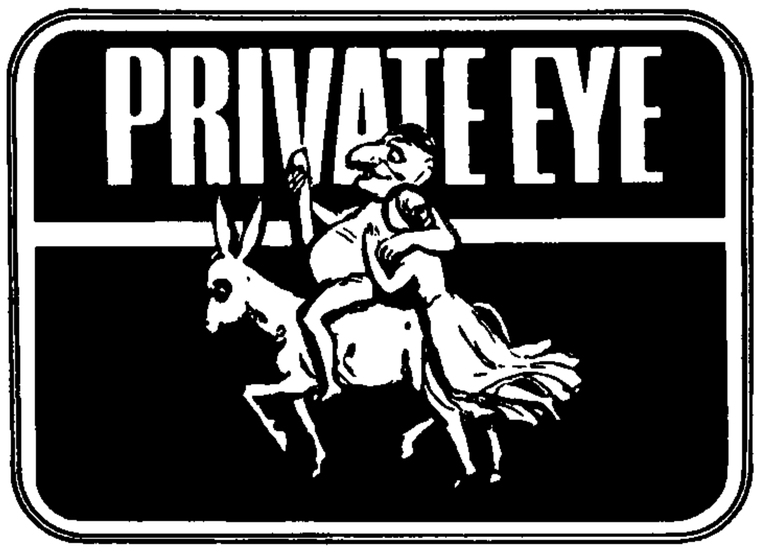


## Now with bonus articles!

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## DODGE CITY

**IT'S not just the huge payouts for bankers that persist despite public outrage. The contribution made by the once-again-profitable banks to the Treasury's empty coffers hasn't budged much either.**

The latest results for Barclays – which has £8.35bn of debt guaranteed by the taxpayer – reveal that in the last six months it paid 19.4 percent tax on £3bn profits, down from 20.4 percent a year earlier. This divergence from the standard company tax rate of 28 percent was, it explained, partly due to "different tax rates which are applied to the profits outside of the UK". Hm, and where that might be? Certainly not the US, where most of Barclays' foreign profits are made and where tax rates are higher than in Britain.

Could it be something to do with the 300-plus tax haven companies Barclays has, or the scores of tax avoidance schemes the bank undertakes through its Barclays Capital arm (profits doubled to £1bn in six months), several of which have been exposed in the *Eye* over the years and half a dozen of which were leaked in all their cunning detail earlier this year? Almost certainly.

Not that the bank's chief executive, John Varley, has anything to do with it, of course. Questioned by a parliamentary committee on the subject, he insisted: "I don't recognise this statement that we have undertaken tax avoidance schemes." Poor thing must still be wondering how his bank manages to save hundreds of millions of pounds on its tax bill every year. (He could try asking the bank's tax avoidance legal adviser, Slaughter & May, which has also earned £22m from the taxpayer advising on bank rescues.)

**PS:** Partly on the back of this tax-dodging, Barclays' 22,000 investment bankers are in line for *average* pay of £200,000. Just as well the news that the bank's high street staff are having their pensions cut was sneaked out a couple of weeks ago before the latest fat-cattery emerged.

## JUST FANCY THAT!

**"For the last decade or so… we have been living under a regime of government by management consultant and policy by Powerpoint. The result has been an explosion of bureaucracy, cost and irritation, endless upheavals and pointless reorganisations."**
***– David Cameron, 13 May 2008***

**"She is exactly the sort of member of parliament I want to see in the House of Commons for the Conservative party as part of the Conservative team."**
***– David Cameron, 24 July 2009, welcoming the election as MP for Norwich North of Chloe Smith, a Deloitte management consultant who cites advising "government and the public services" as preparing her for parliament.***

## EVERY LITTLE £225M HELPS

**IT'S not just big banks like RBS, Lloyds and Barclays who take taxpayer support while avoiding their own taxes (*Eyes passim*).**

The list of institutions benefiting from the government's credit guarantee scheme includes Tesco Personal Finance Ltd, the banking arm of the supermarket giant that is seeking to capitalize on the high street banks' woes. It has a three-year, £225m debt guaranteed under the favourable arrangements.

This, it may be recalled, is the same Tesco that the *Eye* exposed last year as using a web of companies and partnerships in Luxembourg, Ireland, Switzerland and elsewhere to deprive other taxpayers, who are now guaranteeing its borrowings, of scores of millions of pounds.

## NON-CURSE OF GNOME!

**NO SOONER had the *Eye* revealed Audit Commission chairman Michael O'Higgins' prolific tax avoidance (*Eye* 1240) than, er… he had his contract renewed for another three years by local government secretary John Denham.**

"With a challenging fiscal environment ahead our mission of ensuring economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of public spending to deliver high quality public services is more important then ever," said O'Higgins, who also happens to chair the Treasury's audit committee, where he is a non-executive director.

In this latter job he faces quite a challenge, for the Treasury's own accounts have just been "qualified" by the National Audit Office after the bank bail-out that demanded billions before it could be authorised by parliament. Still, this is all in a day's work for a man whose own tax avoidance, like the Icelandic banking adventures of his Audit Commission, have done so much for the fiscal environment!

● *The Audit-acious Commission, p. 28*

*"Oh, for goodness sake Brian, do you have to be so stoical?"*

# DESMOND v. BOWER

**THERE were two big losers in the libel action brought by *Express* owner Richard "Dirty" Desmond against the author Tom Bower. One was Dirty Des, who had his claim rejected by the jury and must now pay £1.5m in costs. The other was Mr Justice Eady, who was twice rebuked by the appeal court for his misconduct of the trial while it was still in progress. Both men had niffy reputations already; not all the perfumes of Araby can sweeten their rancid odour now.**

Desmond himself seemed unaware that he had lost. Immediately after the verdict he issued a statement – dutifully reproduced in his newspapers – expressing "satisfaction" at the outcome. It had been worth bringing the action, he said, "to stand up in court and set the record straight" – even though it was his version of the "record" that the jurors rejected.

As well they might: Dirty Des's testimony was a stew of untruths. The most outrageous was his straight-faced insistence that he would never dream of interfering in the editorial content of his papers. Bower's lawyers compiled a thick dossier of evidence to the contrary, but Mr Justice Eady excluded almost all of it.

Thus, for example, the jurors never heard that Desmond once punched his night editor at the *Express* for not running a story that the proprietor wanted in the paper. Nor were they allowed to see the full text of a memo sent to Desmond in May 2001 by *Sunday Express* editor Michael Pilgrim, protesting at the constant management demands to suppress damaging news about Desmond's friends or business associates while running "unjustified stories to settle scores" against his rivals.

Examples given by Pilgrim included the spiking of pieces about PR man Matthew Freud, about consumer dissatisfaction with Sky TV, and about the financier Alan Shephard (after an intervention on his behalf by comedian Jim Davidson, a friend of Dirty Des). The editor also complained that his hacks had been ordered to seek out and publish negative stories about Conrad Black, with whom Desmond was in dispute over their jointly-owned printworks. Since the *Express*'s attacks on Black were at the heart of *Desmond v Bower*, the judge allowed this part of the Pilgrim memo to be mentioned in court but ruled that the rest was irrelevant and inadmissible, even after Desmond had declared on oath that his editors had complete freedom from proprietorial meddling.

When asked about the Pilgrim memo, Dirty Des said he never received it. But surely he had at least read a front-page story in the *Observer* on 20 May 2001 which quoted from the memo? Apparently not. Nor did he know that Pilgrim had been suspended 24 hours later and then paid off. If Desmond is to be believed (a very big "if" indeed), not only does he have no input into his newspapers, he scarcely notices the hiring and firing of his editors. "I always had a very good relationship with Michael Pilgrim," he told the court, "and he left – I don't even know why he actually left the company."

"Yes, you do," said Bower's QC, Ronald Thwaites. "He left because his key was deprogrammed so he couldn't get in the building on 21 May after the article appeared in the *Observer*." Thwaites then quoted what Desmond wrote in a witness statement signed on 20 June this year: "I was very surprised by the memo... I remember discussing the memo with Paul Ashford, the group editorial editor, who was equally perplexed at the memo given what appeared to be Michael's attitude to us face-to-face." How could he have discussed the memo if he was ignorant of its very existence? Desmond had an ingenious answer: his lawyers had shown him the memo just as he was composing his witness statement this June, and he must have discussed it then with Ashford. The verb "I remember" thus referred to something that happened only minutes earlier.

Quite incredible – and demonstrably untrue. Back in May 2008, as part of his reply to Bower's original defence pleadings, Desmond signed a "statement of truth" which included this: "Save that it is admitted that Mr Pilgrim, the editor of the *Sunday Express* in May 2001, sent a memorandum to the claimant claiming to protest at his alleged interference with his or his journalists' work, which was published in the *Observer* on 20 May 2001, no admissions are made." In the witness box, on oath, Dirty Des said he knew nothing about the memo until June 2009. So how could he admit to it in a court document from May 2008, more than a year earlier? There then followed one of the very long silences that characterised Desmond's evidence whenever he was caught out. (At one point the judge had to warn Janet Desmond to stop mouthing answers to her husband when he seemed lost for words.) Eventually he stuck with his original story:

**Desmond:** I did not receive the memo.

**Thwaites:** Why didn't you say in your reply [to Bower] that that was the position?

**Desmond:** I should've done.

**Thwaites:** Why didn't you?

**Desmond:** Because I didn't.

**Thwaites:** Because you are caught out in a big lie, aren't you?

Despite it all, Desmond kept smiling. Because so much material had been excluded by the judge, he could assume that jurors wouldn't know if what he said on oath was contradicted by the suppressed evidence.

In a pre-trial hearing last November, for instance, Eady had banned the defence from making any allusion to Dirty Des's porn business. So when Thwaites mentioned a *Sunday Telegraph* feature headed "Desmond Laid Bare", and asked Desmond if he found anything offensive in it, the grinning tycoon said no. Although the piece was about Des's profits from pornography – a word he finds highly offensive – Thwaites wasn't allowed to say so.

This time, however, Desmond had overdone the chutzpah. In the absence of the jury, Thwaites complained that he couldn't challenge this dishonest stonewalling without mentioning "the forbidden word" – porn. Even Mr Justice Eady conceded the point, and when the jury returned they were at last permitted to hear the p-word.

Another embarrassment which Desmond had expected to be spared was any mention of Jafar Omid of Pentagon Capital Management. Last July, as first revealed by the *Eye*, Desmond demanded the repayment of some money invested in Pentagon on behalf of his son. If a cheque wasn't sent at once, he warned Omid, "I'm the worst fucking enemy you'll ever have". Three days later, prompted by its owner, the *Sunday Express* ran a libellous attack on Omid and his hedge fund.

This seemed to show the *Express* being used in a way Desmond said was inconceivable – to pursue the owner's grudges. And so, inevitably, Mr Justice Eady ruled it out. Bower's lawyers challenged the order on 6 July in the appeal court, where Lords Justices Rix and Wilson said that the defence should be allowed to summon Jafar Omid and the tape of Desmond threatening him, since there were "striking similarities" between Omid's vilification by the *Express* and that of Conrad Black.

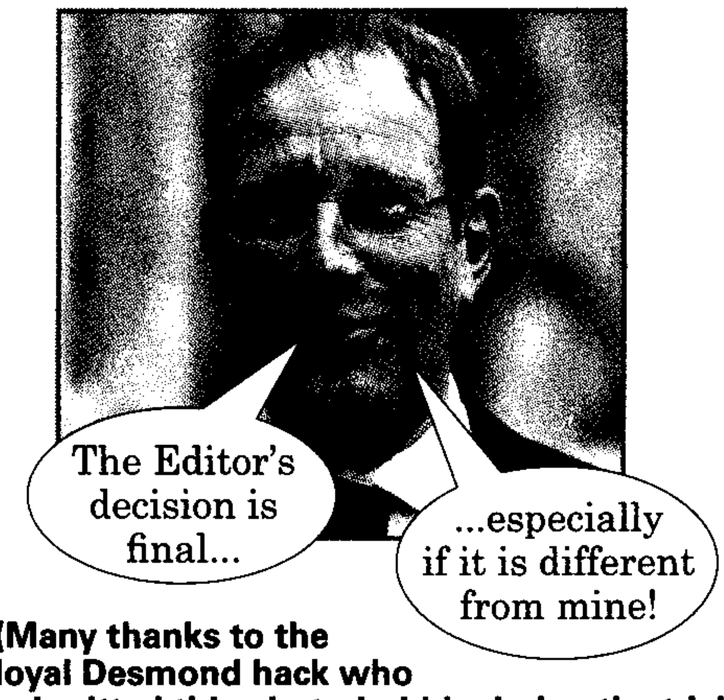
Eady dug his heels in. Even if Omid appeared as a witness, he now ruled, the tape could not be admitted since it would cause too much "delay". The defence scampered off once again to the appeal court, where three lord justices of appeal effectively told Eady to bloody well behave himself or else.

Their comments on Monday 20 July, which couldn't be reported at the time, were bracingly direct.

"The decision of Mr Justice Eady," said Lord Justice Pill, "was plainly wrong." It would be "manifestly unjust to exclude this evidence". Lord Justice Hooper concurred: "I have no doubt that the judge was wrong to exclude the evidence of the telephone call. Indeed I would go further and say not to allow it would risk the possibility of a miscarriage of justice." Lord Justice Wilson, visibly angry that Eady had ignored his previous "strong indication" that the tape should be admissible, pointed out that Desmond had already denied on oath having any grudge against Omid and Pentagon. How could the jury assess the truth of that without hearing him effing and blinding at Omid? "The risk that, without access to the tape, the jury might reach a false conclusion about the existence of a grudge and the genesis of the article relating to Pentagon is substantial." The tape was duly played, and the jurors duly reached the obvious conclusion about the truthfulness of Richard "Dirty" Desmond.

If they had found otherwise, Bower would have had strong grounds for appeal, since Eady's summing-up was littered with misrepresentations and mistakes. At one point, perhaps in a fit of absent-mindedness, he even read out to the jury a passage from a witness statement by Conrad Black which he himself had previously ruled inadmissible.

After the verdict Dirty Des composed his delusional victory statement and flew off with his wife to their villa in Mallorca for two weeks on the sun lounger. Mr Justice Eady left the courtroom looking thunderous, and caught his customary train back home to Kent. How long before he is persuaded to stay there for good?




**(Many thanks to the loyal Desmond hack who submitted this photo-bubble during the trial)**

## LATE EXTRA: HOW HIS PAPERS SAW THE VERDICT

**DESPITE having no influence whatever over his papers, Dirty Des must have been delighted with their coverage of his libel trial.**

"*Daily Star* owner Richard Desmond was last night proud to have 'set the record straight' in a high court battle over claims he abused his position," the *Star* informed readers. The *Express* also skipped nimbly over the small embarrassment of the verdict, presenting the outcome as a triumph for its owner.

JUST FANCY THAT!

**BOWER HAS THE POWER**

*Daily Star sports headline bigging up Bower Hi Ace, a greyhound running at Swindon dog track on 1 July*

# Street Of Shame

## TESTING TIMES

**"THE BBC should get its tanks off our lawn," the *Sunday Times* huffs, complaining that its luring of online readers will kill the national press. The newspaper industry is in crisis, "and the BBC cannot be allowed to push it over the edge".**

Well, the *Sunday Times* is certainly in crisis. Along with the *Sun*, it has for many years been the commercial flagship of the Murdoch fleet. As recently as 2007 its annual profit was £53.4m; last year it made £42.8m. Now, for the first time in history – and to the horror of Murdoch's managers – it is actually losing money.

The financial state of individual Murdoch titles is always concealed in the annual accounts, since the *Sun* and *Screws* are merged in the News Group figures, as are the *Times* and *Sunday Times* within Times Newspapers. According to documents circulating at Wapping, however, the *Sunday Times* lost £16m in 2008-9 and is expected to lose at least another £12m this year. Advertising revenue has fallen 30 percent, partly because the paper's supplements are so dependent on the ever more elusive classified advertisers. Every section – including Style, Travel and the colour magazine – now loses money. Instead of propping up its loss-making daily stablemate, the *ST* is adding the burden of its own losses to the £42m shortfall at the *Times* this year (up from £15.7m in 2008).

And here's another headache for News International's new supremo, Rebekah "Babbling" Brooks: her old paper, the *News of the Screws*, is no longer a cash-cow. Under the dead hand of editor Colin Myler, according to internal figures, the paper's profits of £22m in 2007 dwindled to £16m in 2008 and a miserable £5m this year. On a turnover of more than £160m, these are pisspoor financial returns. And, as Rebekah will no doubt point out to Myler, they contrast sharply with her own *Sun*, which still returns 20 percent profits despite the recession, buoyed up by competing supermarket ads and by cross-subsidy with advertising from BSkyB. The *Sun*'s operating profit this year was £87m.

**RUPERT MURDOCH said he knew nothing about News International's secret payment of £700,000 to Professional Footballers' Association boss Gordon Taylor over the illegal phone-hacking by the *News of the World* on Andy Coulson's watch. "If that had happened, I would have known about it," the Digger said when the *Guardian* broke the news four weeks ago.**

As the last issue of the *Eye* revealed, the directors of News Group Newspapers, the NI subsidiary which publishes the *Screws*, certainly knew about the payment to Taylor: they approved it at a board meeting on 10 June 2008. "If their involvement were revealed," we noted, "it could cause grave embarrassment for the directors of News Group Newspapers Ltd – not least one James Murdoch."

But James was not the sole Murdoch on the board of NGN at the time. He took over from his father as boss of NI six months earlier, in December 2007, the annual accounts for NGN to 29 June 2008, lodged at Companies House, say Rupert remained chairman of NGN and a director until autumn 2008.

So how can he say that he knew nothing about the payment? There seem to be only three possible explanations. Either he's lying; or the poor old booby has lost his memory; or he's such a negligent director and chairman he doesn't even glance at his own board minutes.

## GRAUNING WALLETS

**EDITOR Alan Rusbridger, chief executive Carolyn McCall and other *Grauniad* directors announced in last week's annual report that they were freezing their salaries next year and waiving any bonuses. They could hardly do otherwise when Guardian Media Group made an eye-watering £89.8m loss, which is forcing them to consider such dire measures as closing the *Observer*.**

Amazingly, despite such grim news, the annual report shows that McCall's basic pay went up in the last year by more than 11 percent, or £48,000, to £472,000. Rusbridger's salary also rose 11 percent, or £44,000, to £429,000. Over two years, his pay is up 26 percent from £338,000 in 2007. GMG's contribution to his pension pot has also soared to £156,000 a year from £118,000 two years earlier – a rise of nearly 33 percent since 2007!

The reason given for Rusbridger's pay increase is that he was "appointed editor-in-chief of both the *Guardian* and the *Observer*" at the end of 2007, when his old adversary, the then *Obs* editor Roger Alton, was eased out. What an irony that Rusbridger should earn more as editor-in-chief of the *Obs* when his job may turn out to be, er, shutting it down.

*Guardian* bosses are jubilant at the imminent demise of their Sunday stablemate, which they have been plotting for ages. Five years ago they commissioned a report from McKinsey management consultants, hoping it would recommend closing the *Observer*. Instead, to the *Grauniad*'s astonishment and dismay, McKinsey concluded that the Sunday paper was a valuable "brand" that should be cherished and developed.

Now, at last, the *Observer*-haters may get their way. One plan being discussed by GMG executives is to turn the *Observer* into a small weekly current-affairs mag, rather like the *Spectator* or *New Statesman* – and to offer it as a fold-in supplement to a wholly new Sunday title which will launch the same week the old *Observer* dies. As if to emphasise that the exercise is as much about *Grauniad* triumphalism as about cost-cutting, the new paper will be called the *Sunday Guardian*.

**GUARDIAN Media Group continues to tie itself in knots over tax.**

"The board believes it is the group's corporate and social responsibility to pay the appropriate amount of taxes in accordance with UK and overseas tax legislation," says the annual report. "The board also believes that it has a commercial responsibility to manage the group's affairs in a tax-efficient manner within those rules as well as to manage the group's exposure to tax. The group adopts a conservative tax strategy and is transparent in its dealings with tax."

Despite all this earnest wittering, transparency is in short supply. Buried on page 86 is the admission that two of GMG's holding companies in magazine publisher Emap (which it jointly owns with private equity firm Apax), Eden Acquisition 2 Ltd and Eden Acquisition 4 Ltd, are registered in the Cayman Islands.

There is also mention of a third company, called Eden 2 & Cie SCA. Where is this registered? The report doesn't say. But a trawl of international company records gives an address on 41 Boulevard Prince Henri in that well-known haven of tax transparency and non-avoidance, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg!

## MAIL SCARE

**THE *Daily Mail*'s front page splash on 14 July would have sent fear down the spine of parents everywhere with its report of how a "perfectly healthy" six-year-old girl had become another victim of swine flu.**

To make matters worse, shrieked the *Mail*, Chloe Buckley's death had been preventable. "She was not given the anti-viral drug Tamiflu after her doctor apparently misdiagnosed her illness as tonsillitis," it complained.

When the official cause of the little girl's death emerged a week later, however, the *Mail* of 22 July was more circumspect. It relegated the story to paragraph 20 of that day's swine flu coverage on page 8, where it revealed that the cause of death was in fact septic shock as a result of… tonsillitis.

**THIS photo was chosen to illustrate the *Financial Times*'s special report on Nigerian logging two weeks ago, under the headline "Rearguard action to save vanishing jewel".**

The page was made up and being sent to press when an eagle-eyed sub noticed what had somehow eluded the page editor and even the photographer: that the man under the brolly was, er, squatting to produce logs of a different sort and displaying his genitals to boot. He was hastily replaced with a Nigerian wearing a pair of shorts. Rearguard action indeed!

## FUN IN THE SUN

**"AGENT and a Giant," sobbed the *Sun* in its four-page pull-out tribute to Bobby Robson, recording how "a steady procession of well-wishers" were paying tribute at the ground of Newcastle United, from where he was sacked in 2004.**

"Scarves, shirts and flowers were left by many of the 50,000 supporters," the paper noted, perhaps impressed that this was even more than the 13,870 majority who had demanded he be immediately fired as England manager when it launched a "You The Jury" poll on whether "Bungler Bobby, the Frank Spencer of Football" should keep his job in June 1988.

Last week, however, the paper was pursuing a rather different editorial line, claiming "his peerless integrity, his granite will to win and generosity to his opponents came to define all that was best in football at a time when sportsmanship was being distorted by the lure of big money".

That would presumably include the wad of cash the *Sun* paid for the revelations of Robson's alleged former mistress just ahead of the World Cup in 1990, prompting him to bring forward the announcement of his resignation.

**"AMY Winehouse's slimeball husband did everything in his power to avoid jail," declared the *Sun* a year ago. "But justice was done yesterday as Blake Fielder-Civil was banged up for viciously attacking a pub landlord and perverting justice… the pondlife druggie."**

Fielder-Civil's subsequent stint in rehab did little to improve his standing in the *Sun*. He was "vile and abusive" in October 2008; a "hopeless junkie" in January; a "lowlife junkie" whose "addiction is just as bad as ever" in March; and nothing less than "the world's biggest waste of space" by April.

Who better, then, to receive a generous wodge of the *Sun*'s cash last month in return for three days of exclusive front-page revelations about the "star's sordid drugs hell, by her ex"? "In our celebrity-obsessed society, Blake Fielder-Civil's story of excess stands as a warning," the paper announced in a pious editorial.

**"THE public gaze isn't a good place to grieve," tutted *Sun* agony aunt Deidre Saunders over this week's revelation from Jade Goody's mother Jackiey Budden that her late daughter had spoken to her during a séance.**

And who had encouraged this vulnerable mourner into the spotlight? A clue was provided by the vast strapline next to Saunders' column: "Watch amazing video of Jackiey's psychic session at thesun.co.uk."

## STREET OF SHAME (continued)

**INCREDULITY all round at the *Sunday Telegraph* after the appointment of Kamal Ahmed as City editor.**

Not only does he lack any experience as a business hack, he also has a rather tarnished reputation from his stint as political editor of the *Observer*, where he famously relied on Alastair Campbell to feed him stories in the run-up to the Iraq war – as described in Nick Davies's book *Flat Earth News*.

Ahmed's subsequent career as spin doctor for Trevor Phillips at the Human Rights and Equality Commission was equally calamitous, as the watchdog succumbed to canine distemper and ringworm. So now it's back to Fleet Street for the nimble-footed hack.

His move to the *Sunday Telegraph* has little to do with the paper's editor, Ian MacGregor; it was the brainwave of *Telegraph* editor-in-chief Will Lewis. For Ahmed does have one important qualification for the job: he has been a mate of Lewis ever since they both studied journalism at City University two decades ago.

**"MORE than 80 years after women were given the right to vote, we seem more convinced than ever that the chief role of women in our society is adornment," thundered Christina Patterson in the *Independent* last Saturday.**

"Want to be a receptionist? You'd better be hot. Want to read the news? You'd better be hot. Present a chat show? Judge ballroom dancing? Write a book?... you'd better be hot. Oh, and young. Ideally, under 30."

No such prejudices at the *Independent*, which that very same day carried a number of luridly illustrated adverts for "Live Chat Granny Sex Relief", "Horny Granny Quick Relief", and "1-2-1 Sex Mature Women" alongside the "Hot Married Women Addicted to Casual Sex" and "Easy Teens Willing to Please" in their regular full page of premium phone-line ads.

## DESMOND P.S.

**BACK in 2003, when Conrad Black was suing the *Sunday Express* for saying his business was on the skids, Richard "Dirty" Desmond countersued over Black's remark, reported in the *Telegraph*, that the *Express* was "published by a mutant smut and defamation company, run by a pornographer and a couple of ex-convicts".**

Naturally he couldn't sue over the p-word, since he was and is a pornographer; but, as he told the jury during his recent libel action against Tom Bower, he had been grievously offended by the "very damaging" suggestion that he would ever consort with convicts.

So whom did Desmond call as witnesses to help furnish and burnish his reputation in the Bower case? Aside from two paid lackeys (his finance director and the current *Sunday Express* editor), there were three.

Dirty Des himself was the main attraction; then came financial hack Anil Bhoyrul, who in 2006 was sentenced to 180 hours of community service for conspiracy to breach the financial services act; and finally Lord Black of Crossharbour, whose evidence came in the form of an emailed statement because "he is overseas", as the court document charmingly put it. In short: a pornographer and a couple of convicts!

Given this, and the trial outcome, Dirty Des must have been pleased with the way Black's old paper reported his travails. On the day after the verdict, the *Daily Telegraph*, having previously ignored the trial altogether, ran a report by Andrew Pierce (who hadn't been in court once) which gave such disproportionate space to Desmond's comments one might almost think he had won, or at least forced a draw.

FACT: Thirsty *Telegraph* supremo Will Lewis is an old friend and admirer of Dirty Des – and dined with him during the trial.

## LINE OF INQUIRY

**"TO say that the National Pandemic Flu Service has been delayed, or that it should have been introduced sooner, is untrue," insisted health minister Gillian Merron last month.**

Curious, then, that giving evidence to the Lords select committee on science and technology on 2 July, Merron should have told their lordships that "it is true indeed that the original Flu Line was on course to be delivered by the end of May", but that it had been "put on hold" because "we would have been remiss not to have tested it sufficiently to make sure that it both would work, but that it was also value for money, and that involved the approval of both the Treasury and the Department of Health."

Fair enough, you might think, given that no one knew swine flu was on its way until the end of April – but in fact, the Flu Line has been planned since November 2007. It was proposed in a Department of Health report as a service which would be activated "from WHO Phase 5" in any future outbreak, and "expand to provide rapid assessment and where necessary access to antiviral treatment for symptomatic patients" as soon as Phase 6 was declared.

Phase 5 of the swine flu outbreak – defined by the World Health Organisation as "characterised by human-to-human spread of the virus into at least two countries… a strong signal that a pandemic is imminent" – came on 29 April. Phase 6 – "a global pandemic is under way" – was declared on 11 June. The "interim service" being offered in England did not go live until 23 July.

"Launching the service could only be done at the point where we moved from local outbreaks of swine flu to significant levels of infection across the country," claimed Merron last week.

The committee voiced "significant concerns about the delay" in launching the full-scale Flu Line service – postponed to the vague "autumn of this year". All Merron was able to offer was that "we are in the final stages of concluding agreements with private sector providers and also memoranda of understanding with public sector bodies." A major health IT project being negotiated with the private sector? Nothing to worry about there at all, then…

## REVOLVING FLAWS

**THE advisory committee on business appointments, which polices the jobs ministers and Whitehall mandarins take when they leave office, has harsh words for the government in its latest annual report.**

Responding to a Commons inquiry into lobbying by ex-civil servants and ministers, it highlighted a demand from MPs that "measures are needed... to make it harder for politicians and public servants to use the information and contacts they have built up in office as an inducement to other potential employers", while noting that the government had done bugger all about it.

With the whole cabinet facing the prospect of losing their jobs in the coming general election, they have little incentive to tighten up rules which will make it harder for them to cash in quickly. But at least the government has responded to the call from MPs for the advisory committee to be more "representative of society at large" with four new appointments.

The most prominent is Lord Gus McDonald, who knows a thing or two about revolving doors. He was a Labour minister but is now European chairman of Australian private equity firm Macquarie, which owns privatised or regulated assets such as the M6 motorway PFI scheme; the M1-A1 link; and Moto motorway service stations. Macquarie also owns Thames Water and Bristol Airport, not to mention Airwave, the privately supplied radio system for the emergency services – a scheme launched when McDonald was in charge of public service reform. Macquarie needs to stay close to government and has lobbied parliament over rules governing private equity firms and road building. It is also a member of FlyingMatters, the pro-airport lobby.

McDonald is joined on the advisory committee by Lord Ian Lang, who lost his job as a trade minister in 1997 and promptly took on six directorships.

## CALLED TO ORDURE

**AS SOON as an exhausted, demoralised Commons broke up for its summer recess, right-wing newspapers – normally so opposed to "nanny state government" – wailed about MPs starting a "three-month holiday". If Fleet Street editors dislike big-state legislation, shouldn't they be delighted the Westminster law factory has shut up shop until October?**

Defence secretary **Bob Ainsworth** was ruthlessly skewered. Having been told on his appointment a few weeks ago that he was "out of his depth" and "useless" and "an insult to our brave lads", bodger Ainsworth quietly floated off for a few days' leave. Then the row about wounded soldiers' compensation broke out and Ainsworth decided to return to Whitehall – only for rent-a-gob Thatcherite historian Andrew Roberts to pen an absurd piece in the *Daily Mail* headlined "It Would Be Better For Our Boys If He Stayed On Holiday".

Our politicians may not be spotless, and Ainsworth certainly ain't Einstein, but sometimes the press's determination to be outraged is, well, outrageous.

Other politicians shrewdly calculated that the end of the parliamentary season was an excellent time to grab some easy headlines. Step forward various select committee chairmen. One of the most frequent complaints from senior MPs recently has been that the government releases important announcements to the media first rather than to parliament. Yet here were select committee chiefs doing exactly that – waiting until the Commons had started its recess until releasing supposedly important news. The guilty included: **Louise Ellman**, chair of the transport committee, **Hywel Francis**, Welsh affairs committee chairman, **John McFall** of the Treasury committee, **Edward Leigh**, chairman of the public accounts committee, **Phil Willis**, the chair of the innovation, universities, science and skills committee, **Andrew Dismore**, head of the human rights committee, **Terry Rooney**, the obscure chairman of the work and pensions committee, **Barry Sheerman**, schools committee chairman and **Mike Gapes**, who runs the foreign affairs committee.

Why do it this way? Because if you wait until the recess, there is a greater chance of being invited on to Radio 4's *Today* programme to fill some silly-season airtime. Of course, it works best if you combine the issue you are meant to be talking about with some opinions about how useless Gordon Brown is. Barry Sheerman, therefore, generated the most self-publicity of all.

*'Gavel Basher'*

## GREEK TRAGEDY

**ANDREW SYMEOU, whose case was first highlighted in *Eye* 1217 last year, is now likely to spend months in a Greek jail before his case is even heard, after law lords here refused to hear his appeal against extradition.**

Mr Symeou, now aged 20, was extradited under the fast-track European arrest warrant system last month, without any British court considering the supposed evidence that he was responsible for the manslaughter of a fellow holidaymaker in Zante in 2007. The *Eye* – which has seen the evidence assembled by Greek police – described their case last August as "flawed, contradictory and in places ludicrous".

Jago Russell, chief executive of Fair Trials International, agrees, saying: "The case against Andrew Symeou is built on mistaken identity, conflicting evidence and a flawed police investigation."

Although Mr Symeou has made no attempt to abscond since the day Scotland Yard officers turned up at his door last July, the Greek court refused him bail pending his trial because he has no permanent home in Greece. He lost his case against extradition earlier this year and the law lords refused to hear an appeal, saying his case "did not have an arguable point of law of general public importance".

Surely the question of whether someone should be extradited to face trial abroad without even considering allegations of police misconduct, including violent intimidation of witnesses, is a matter of public importance?

## NEWS FROM THE SANDPIT

**THE Ministry of Defence doesn't just find itself having to rely on Russian-built and Ukrainian-crewed helicopters to fill in the gaps in its transport aircraft fleet in Afghanistan (see last *Eye*). Civilian airliners are being contracted, too.**

The aprons at RAF Brize Norton and RAF Lyneham are often home to unusual aircraft, civvy planes from Oman Air and other Middle Eastern carriers among them. These aircraft augment the tired fleet of air transport Tristars operated by 216 Squadron – a fleet so old and maintenance-heavy it is known by soldiers kept waiting while new parts are bolted on as the RAF's static display team.

They fly troops from the UK out to bases in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, where they are transferred on to military C-17 Globemasters and C-130 Hercules transports for the final leg of their journeys to Kandahar. The transfers are necessary because only these military aircraft have the defensive suites built in to counter threats from surface-to-air missiles and, to a limited extent, ground fire that could be encountered on their final approach in Afghan airspace. They carry flares and chaff to confuse heat-seeking missiles, as well as other electronic countermeasures.

But now it emerges that two civvy airliners are flying directly to Kandahar, even though they have no defensive suites fitted. Surely this can't continue?

*'Squarebasher'*

## ORDER OF THE SARAH BROWN NOSE

**"Some observers may say that she is being manipulated by Gordon's advisers to rescue his career. I disagree – I'm sure Sarah is calling the shots and deciding her own agenda... I said it last week, and it's worth saying again – this woman is wasted as a wife. What she should do is encourage her husband to take an academic job, where he can look after the kids, and she should stand for Parliament."**

**–*Janet Street-Porter*, Daily Mail, *6 July***

## BRUSSELS SPROUTS

**ALARMED that new MEP Marta Andreasen, former European Commission chief accountant and whistleblower, might bring too much scrutiny to bear if she were elected vice-chairman of the parliament's budget control committee, MEPs devised a cunning plan: change the voting rules!**

Instead of a normal show of hands, the MEPs opted instead for a secret ballot at which leading Socialists and members of the centre-right European People's Party ganged up to outvote the elevation of Andreasen, newly-elected UKIP MEP for South East England and the party's treasurer. This prompted Lib Dem MEP Chris Davies to comment later that "parliament had shot itself in the foot".

Andreasen is used to infantile tactics being used against her. Neil Kinnock, when he was commission vice-president in charge of reform (ha ha), had her sacked for exposing the commission's pisspoor accountancy and for refusing to sign off the commission's 2001 accounts. He even tried to stop her appearing before the parliament's budget committee – the same one on which she might have been so effective as vice-chairman.

While parliamentary leaders Martin Schulz, Joseph Daul and their cronies went off to celebrate their shoddy victory with champagne (at taxpayers' expense), Andreasen vowed to remain a thorn in the budget control committee's side as the sole British MEP sitting on it.

**Desperate politicians, dismal economy, grasping agriculture, fishing rights you can screw US over**

**WHILE the European commission and big member states like France and Germany plan to crack down on tax havens (while Britain pretends to), the EU's house bank, the European Investment Bank (EIB), is busily lending to companies established in... tax havens.**

In some cases, senior EIB officials sit on the boards of those self-same tax haven-registered companies.

Particularly notable is EIB lending for supposed development projects in poor countries. In reality, this "development assistance" is a scam under which low-cost public capital is channelled to private equity firms that look for projects with juicy returns of 20 percent or more, before remitting the proceeds to low or no-tax and minimum transparency jurisdictions such as Mauritius.

This will come as no surprise to *Eye* readers who have followed the CDC/Actis scandal. Indeed, Britain's CDC Group, formerly the Commonwealth Development Corporation, is both a beneficiary of the EIB's largesse, and a lender to many of those same tax dodgers.

For example, in June the EIB agreed a $15m loan to Shorecap International Limited, a private equity outfit specialising in microfinance, in which CDC also invests. Cyrille Arnould, the EIB's head of microfinance, is one of Shorecap's directors. The firm, which boasted in its 2007 report of an average 23 percent rate of return, is incorporated in the Cayman Islands.

Arnould is also on the board of Africap, a Mauritius-based investment company, which received €5m from the EIB in 2007. Mauritius, a tiny Indian Ocean island with 1.3m people, is a favourite haunt of so-called development funds, including Adlevo Capital, Africinvest Limited, GroFin and Leapfrog Investments. These firms alone have shared €65m of EIB money in the last 12 months. Mauritius is the source of an extraordinary 44 percent of foreign investment in India – underlining the extent to which development assistance has in fact become a tax avoidance scam.

During 2008 the EIB also agreed loans totalling €53m for funds run by Aureos Capital Limited, also Mauritius-registered. Until it was sold to its managers at a knock-down price (see *Eye* 1240), Aureos was a joint venture between CDC and Norway's development fund Norfund, which has imitated CDC's tax haven strategy. The difference between CDC and Norfund, however, is that the Norwegian government has now told Norfund to stop investing in tax havens. Counter Balance, a campaign group that has analysed EIB lending to tax dodgers, noted that Norway finally came round to following "the logic that development funds should not support tax evasion". When will Britain, and the EIB, do the same?

**MANY left-wing members of Unison, Britain's biggest public sector union, have been unhappy for years with the way Unison continues to bankroll the Labour party despite the government's enthusiastic privatisation of public services, which puts its members' pay and conditions at risk.**

For the last three years, whenever Unison branches have tried to table motions to their national conference calling for an examination of Unison's relationship with Labour, the "standing orders committee" has ruled them out of order.

In 2007 four local branch secretaries, Glenn Kelly, Onay Kasab, Suzanne Muna and Brian Debus, distributed a leaflet featuring a cartoon which likened the standing orders committee to the three wise monkeys of the Buddhist proverb who "see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil".

The four - all members of the Socialist Workers Party - were promptly "investigated" for allegedly distributing "racist" material. After all, notable racists of the past, such as, er, Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi, were fond of quoting the three wise monkeys.

Last week the absurd two-year "investigation" finally ground to a halt. The union ruled that while it accepted that the sparts had "no racist intent", they were nevertheless guilty of "not taking care to anticipate that an individual may find the ancient Buddhist proverb to be racially offensive". Kasab and Kelly were banned from holding any union office for three years, Muna for four and Debus for five. Ain't Stalinism grand?

*'Blackleg'*

*"You might get away with this"*

# TV

## Desperate Romantics (BBC2)

**IN THE course of all those articles on "My Swine Flu Hell" for the national press, journalists with hot and sniffy children have explained how they had to persuade the kids to swallow their Tamiflu by hiding the capsules in spoonfuls of strawberry jam.**

Television has a similar attitude to the arts. People have to be made to take the stuff – because it's probably good for them – but the folks in charge are so convinced they're going to spit it out, they smother the bitter pill in all manner of distractions. The most popular spoonful of jam is dramatisation: a BBC1 drama about how Miss Austen desperately sought her own Mr Darcy and a BBC2 play about the mad shagger beneath the bald, bespectacled, poetic exterior of Philip Larkin helped to fulfil the cultural remit without being too worthy and stuffy.

So now how to get a dollop of art history down the throats of those who gag at the illustrated lectures of Schama, Graham-Dixon and Marlow? Hey, what about dramatising the Pre-Raphaelite as a, you know, sort of mid-19th-century version of Damien and the gang of Young British Artists? There could be lots of knockers on display because they painted nudes, and even a full-frontal because Ruskin went funny when he saw the lady garden of his missus on their wedding night. And, if they gave it a title that sounds like one of those shows where Sarah Parish and Amanda Holden keep shagging everyone, they might even bounce a few more people in.

Hence **Desperate Romantics**, which is written by one of TV's best dramatists (Peter Bowker, who scripted the impressive *Occupation*) but just churns with the nerves of the executives who commissioned it. You can almost see the Post-it notes stuck to the covers of the early drafts.

A key piece of feedback, one suspects, was: "Make sure we know who the hell they all are." As a result, the opening episode contains more introductions than a website for swingers. There's a lengthy voiceover running through the artists, with handy tags as the camera lingers on them: long-haired Dante Gabriel Rossetti is caught in the middle of a shag, while William Holman Hunt is first seen

thumping a punch bag with his shirt off – scenes which answer the little yellow sticker from the sixth floor asking: "Can we make them men of action rather than art?"

But, even though we now have two of the boring old brush-pushers established as a bonker and a boxer, there's still the risk of viewers not knowing which is which. So here come more introductions: "Mr Rossetti, Mr Hunt, Mr Millais," begins a visitor, running helpfully round the assembly like a human caption machine. When the lads meet a famous artist in a gallery – "Look, is that...?", "Yes, it's Ruskin!" – they again tell Ruskin who they all are, with useful thumbnail sketches for the slower viewer: "I give you John Millais... Gabriel Rossetti, half-Italian, half-mad..." In case we haven't got it, Rossetti then suddenly quotes some poetry, adding: "I wrote that, you know," to which another human caption machine replies: "I know, Mr Rossetti."

And, just in case any of the audience is terrified that someone is going to say "perspective" or "impasto" in a minute, the director makes sure that there is always more arse than art on display. To the sound of a jaunty score of the sort that used to punctuate Sid James's leers at Babs Windsor, the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood dash around town in search of a red-headed babe to be their muse.

We are never more than a few minutes from a nipple and, for the inevitable scene when Ruskin has his hissy over the minge of the missus, the network even allows a rare example these days of full-frontal female pubic nudity. Clearly, it's a bit of a bummer for the production that there was no bedroom action at all in the Ruskin house, but this is neatly solved by allowing the distinguished critic to have lurid fantasy sequences of Mrs R being multiply humped by other men.

Which just leaves the memo from the controller urging the show to make as many anachronistic comparisons as possible with the YBAs. So the voiceover nudge-nudges that the pre-Raphaelites "conjured success from the illusion of success" and the script is filled with phrases ahead of their time: "I offer you ambition on toast, with a side-order of potential," someone says, while one of the PRBs hopes that the public will be impressed with his "almost insane work ethic". When a recent work by Rossetti is praised, he protests: "Are you saying everything I did before was shit?"

Still, at least we should be grateful that he doesn't say: "Are you dissing me, Millais?"

Those "My Swine Flu" articles generally end with the revelation that the kids spat out the jammy Tamiflu because they realised that they were being tricked. In the same way, the huge coatings of emergency preserve smeared all over the art history have made *Desperate Romantics* almost impossible to swallow.

*'Remote Controller'*

# MEDIA NEWS

**IT USED to be the basic job of a BBC producer to come up with ideas and turn them into programmes. Indeed, the ability to do this was considered crucial when candidates for jobs were boarded.**

But now, producers incapable of coming up with ideas are no longer to be discriminated against. A new team of "creative facilitators" has been, er, created, "to find inspirational solutions for programme makers suffering from the deepest creative block".

They have already set up sessions to help hapless producers come up with ideas for the coverage of the Olympics: "They began by asking participants for a favourite memory: a race, an opening ceremony, anything to help ease them into the topic." And for the severely challenged: "People are often asked to bring something to the session which could be used as an icebreaker – from CDs to Lego."

**"NATION shall speak unto nation." So proclaims the BBC's coat of arms. But nobody can speak unto anybody at all these days, thanks to the "outsourcing" of the BBC's phone system to Siemens.**

The £2bn, 10-year Technology Framework Contract, signed with Siemens Business Services in 2004, included the installation of a new internet phone system designed to save money with every call. But hacks relying on their phones to put together news and current-affairs programmes are finding calls impossible to make because the phones simply do not work. All the while Siemens engineers continue to "roll out" more of the new, useless phones at neighbouring desks.

The last straw was the week when the entire phone system at Television Centre crashed three times, forcing Steve Mitchell, director of News, to demand that Siemens suspend all expansion of the network until "core problems" are resolved. Meanwhile, a separate phone system has been installed in some of the critical news areas to avoid potential disaster.

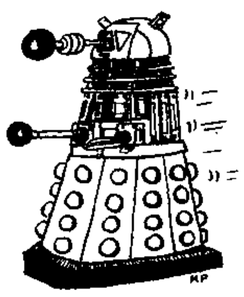
It's two years since the public accounts committee concluded that the BBC had failed to ensure it got best value when it outsourced its IT department to Siemens. Even after all this time, exasperated hacks who wish to complain to Siemens about its failed systems will have to do so from the public call box in Wood Lane.

# JOINED-UP BBC

**July 2009:** BBC orders newsreader George Alagiah to resign as unpaid patron of charity Fairtrade Foundation, as it "represents a potential conflict of interest which could undermine impartiality".

**August 2009:** BBC denies there is any conflict of interest in case of BBC1 controller Jay Hunt, who is registered as company secretary of her husband's firm Brightspark TV, which is paid by BBC to train television presenters.

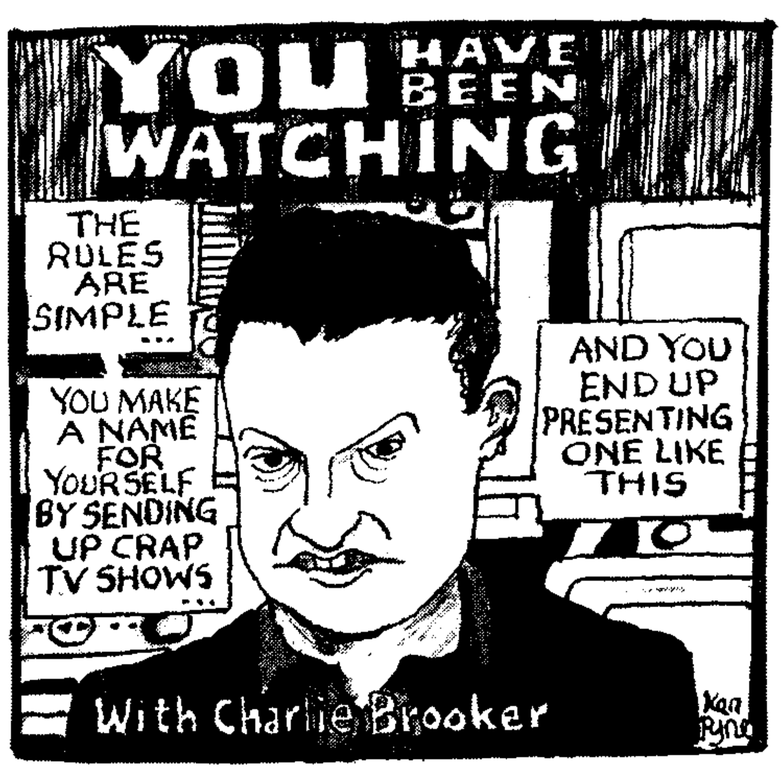
# BIRTSPEAK 2.0



**"Targeted outreach activity will raise the profile of the BBC in the North of England ahead of the move to Salford.**

"More strategic and effective use of off-air projects such as BBC Blast and Your Game – aimed at disadvantaged young people – can help give the BBC a foothold in some of the harder to reach northern communities ahead of the 2011 relocation, said the head of BBC Outreach... Among the opportunities offered by the BBC's connect and create initiative are bespoke team challenges, allowing colleagues to work together and with outside bodies to give something back to the community."

*– Report in* Ariel, *BBC in-house magazine*


YOU HAVE BEEN WATCHING
THE RULES ARE SIMPLE...
YOU MAKE A NAME FOR YOURSELF BY SENDING UP CRAP TV SHOWS...
AND YOU END UP PRESENTING ONE LIKE THIS
With Charlie Brooker
Ken Pyne

## HUMBUG OF THE YEAR

**"TOO-BLUE Cameron" harrumped the *Daily Express* (prop R. Desmond) over the Tory leader's use of the word "twat" in a radio interview which, the paper claimed, "has triggered an inquiry by broadcast watchdogs."**

"Watchdog Ofcom said it must consider the matter after receiving a handful of complaints," the paper declared (even as the regulator was insisting to the BBC that it "had not received any complaints about the interview.") "Any punishment would hit the radio station, not Mr Cameron… 't**t' is one of the oldest swearwords in the language."

That very night, TV station Television X (prop R. Desmond) – hit with its own £27,500 fine from Ofcom in May for broadcasting restricted hardcore porn – was showing a double bill of what the *Express*'s listings coyly called "Fill That C***."

## AD NAUSEAM

**A BAD week for sausages. First the Advertising Standards Authority rapped Mattessons sausages for a series of radio ads which featured a male voice asking women where they like to stick a big sausage.**

Then Richmond Sausages' most recent campaign reappeared on our screens. In it, a man tasting a sausage is transported back to childhood – an idea taken from the animated film *Ratatouille*, in which a pompous food critic underwent precisely the same regression.

**THE quiet summer months in adland have been livened up immeasurably by an online video of a digital ad wonk called Gareth Phillips.**

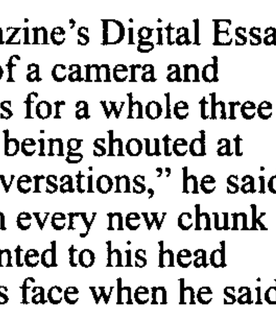
As part of *Campaign* magazine's Digital Essay series, Phillips stood in front of a camera and talked first-class branding balls for a whole three minutes. "It's no longer about being shouted at – it's about understanding conversations," he said, out-Brenting David Brent with every new chunk of management-speak. He pointed to his head when he said "thinking", to his face when he said "language", and to his ears when he said "listen". And he topped off a bravura performance by suggesting that marketing people needed to start speaking "plain English".

The clip has since gone viral. Some of the comments on the magazine's website suggested that Phillips' performance was a brilliant parody, others that it was career suicide, but in any case his firm Syzygy had beaten them to the punch – Phillips was replaced as MD after nine years at the agency at the end of June, no doubt to continue his brand conversation elsewhere.

## DUMB BRITAIN

*Are You Smarter Than A Ten-Year-Old, Sky One*

**Noel Edmonds:** In which city was the philanthropist Dr Barnardo born?



**Contestant:** The only Dr Barnardo I know was the one who did the first heart transplant… which is South Africa.

**NE:** What is the highest layer of a rainforest called?

**Contestant:** Well, at the bottom you've got grass and then it's shrubs and animals and things. So it's the trees.

*The Weakest Link, BBC1*

**Anne Robinson:** After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to two of his disciples on the road to where – Emmaus or Amarillo?

**Contestant** (*after some consideration*): Amarillo.

## MUSIC & MUSICIANS

**BBC PROMS director Roger Wright joked in print the other week that despite a season packed with highbrow goodies, the Prom everyone's been talking about is the crowd-pleaser featuring the Ukele Orchestra of Great Britain on 18 August, which has massed ranks of the world's silliest instrument strumming arrangements of the big tune from Beethoven's 9th and *Jerusalem*.**

But Wright knows perfectly well that the come-back of the ukelele is the freak success of the music business in the past few years.

Not so long ago the uke was just an accessory to the joke falsetto of Tiny Tim. Manufacturers had gone out business; and in Hawaii, the instrument's home-territory, it had been all but banned for reinforcing racial stereotypes.

But now, the makers are back in business with a vengeance and there's a one-year waiting list for handmade ukes. The internet has made instant stars of players like Jake Shimabukuro, who one day was busking in a park, the next was splashed across the globe on YouTube and is now making records with Yo Yo Ma and doing world tours. Interestingly, Mr Shimabukuro was been welcomed with open arms in Hawaii. Racial stereotypes apparently aren't such a big deal when there's serious money to be made.

**ELSEWHERE in the Proms organisation, some at the BBC are slightly worried that the choice of conductor for this year's last night won't generate much of a thrill because he's not well known enough.**

It's true the BBCSO's principal guest conductor David Robertson is both experienced and distinguished in the world of contemporary music, but he's hardly a household name beyond it. Sad proof of this emerged last week when his record company had to withdraw his latest release – a CD of music by the American John Adams – because someone got his name wrong on the cover-wrap. Mass-pulpings followed, along with red faces all round.

If his name were more unusual – like that, say, of the BBCSO's chief conductor Jiri Belohlavek – perhaps people might make more of an effort to get it right. Let's hope poor Mr Robinson is spared another blunder.

*'Lunchtime O'Boulez'*

## HOW POLLS WORK

**"LONDON RACES TO A GOLDEN OLYMPICS," proclaimed the front page of the London *Evening Standard*, before revealing that "a poll has found Londoners are resoundingly behind the games" and giving them "growing support". Hurrah! But is it true?**

The paper relied on polling by UKNOW [*Shurely "UnKnown"? Ed*], a division of PR firm Hall & Partners, which had surveyed just 254 Londoners, 64 percent of whom backed the games. "Growing support"? Before London won the bid in 2005, a full-scale ICM poll found that at that time 79 percent of Londoners supported plans for the games.

But a similarly representative poll of more than 1,000 Londoners conducted by YouGov in April this year found that support had slumped to just 54 percent – the lowest level yet recorded. Where did this interesting London story appear? Nowhere.

The YouGov poll, the results of which have been seen by the *Eye*, was carried out on behalf of… the *Evening Standard*. Alas, the lukewarm support it revealed did not fit the "positive" news agenda of *Standardva* editor Geordie Greig and his former KGB agent proprietor Alexander Lebedev. So it was quietly dropped and a survey more in tune with the Lebedev line arranged.

Just like the old days, eh, Alexei?

## WORLD OF PHOTOGRAPHY

**THE *Grauniad*'s parent company blamed "very difficult trading conditions" for its decision to make a rights grab for work done by freelance photographers at all its papers last week.**

The possibility that Guardian News and Media (GNM) would stop paying repro fees – ie paying again if they used images several times – was raised back in April to the fury of photographers for whom second- and third-use payments can make up around a quarter of their income. But the company then fell silent on the subject.

The National Union of Journalists tried to negotiate and threatened strike action if the plan went ahead – but it got no response from GNM bosses for more than two months. Last week photographers were sent an email by managing editor Chris Elliott, stating that GNM would indeed stop paying re-use fees from 1 September. From then on, standard terms will grant the papers "perpetual licence" to re-use pictures without paying. Oliver Laurent of the *British Journal of Photography* described the move as "a clear rights grab".

"By insisting on free re-use of images, GNM is making it even more difficult to earn a living as a press photographer," said the NUJ's John Toner, acting for the photographers who have been warned off talking to the press themselves. "We intend to resist this imposition."

But is GNM's cry of hard times the real reason for the rights grab? The snappers were even willing to discuss smaller fees to keep their rights but got no answer.

**Hassan Nasrallah, the Hizbollah leader, sent the Iranian president a personal letter. "Your re-election represents a great hope to all the oppressed people, holy worriers and resistance fighters who reject the powers of arrogance and occupation," he said.**

*Independent*

## SUPERMODELS

KERBER

I LOVE BIRTHDAY PARTIES!!!
YES..... THEY'RE ALWAYS FULL OF LITTLE SURPRISES!!!
LOOK— IT'S A BIRTHDAY CAKE JUMPING OUT OF A GIRL!!!
PUKE!!!
TOILET
CLAP!

## MEDICINE BALLS

# The hype about herpes

**LET's hear it for the Herpes Viruses Association. Founded more than 25 years ago to counter the herpes hype, the HVA has been a beacon of sanity, de-stigmatising cold sores wherever they occur and counselling, supporting and educating those with herpes.**

For most of its existence the HVA received a "section 64" grant of £25,000 a year from the Department of Health; but following a review, this support has been withdrawn because its activities could not be redefined as a "new project". Unless new funds are secured, its long-term future is in doubt.

Herpes does far more psychological damage than physical. Ironically, misinformation about herpes started with the launch of a drug, acyclovir, that curtails and prevents attacks. Acyclovir was discovered in 1974 and in the long run-up to its launch in 1982, GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) put its marketing department into overdrive. The media took the bait, and *Time* magazine took it twice, describing it as "the new sexual leprosy" (1980) or "the new Scarlet Letter" (1982). Herpes is only incurable in the same way chicken pox is incurable. The virus hangs round in the nerve roots and can (but usually doesn't) reactivate. When it does recur, each attack tends to be milder than the last and is often unnoticeable. We don't call children with chicken pox lepers, so why pick on herpes?

Herpes simplex virus comes in two types. Type 1 typically causes cold sores around the mouth, type 2 in the genital area, but both can cross over. Up to 60 percent of new genital herpes is type 1, passed on by oral sex. from someone shedding the virus without realising it. Seventy five percent of those with herpes have only mild or non-existent symptoms so you often don't know you've got it or are passing it on. Very few people pass an infection on deliberately, and blame is pointless and destructive. First symptoms can appear months or years after the initial infection, so a sudden crop of blisters does not mean infidelity.

Seventy to 85 percent of people, depending on their age, have antibodies to type 1 herpes. We've nearly all been infected, but only a few get symptoms. Type 1 antibodies give you a lot of protection against the symptoms of type 2 infection, so if one person in a couple has genital herpes, and the other has a blood test showing antibodies to type 1, he or she is very unlikely to be troubled by type 2 infection, even if it occurs.

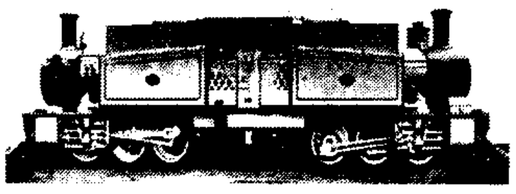
For the few people who get recurrent severe herpes, acyclovir works well to suppress attacks. It has been around so long, it's had a name change (to aciclovir) and is cheap as chips. A whole month's supply costs the NHS just £9, though many doctors are reluctant to give it because they still think of the very expensive wonderdrug launched 27 years ago and they don't know much about herpes. A lot of women treated for recurrent thrush have herpes. Which is precisely why the HVA is so important. The advice and support it gives is spot on (which is why M.D. became a patron).

Shortly after acyclovir was launched and herpes hype hit a peak, a study of 375 people with genital herpes found that half had suffered depression, 35 percent avoided intimate relationships, 35 percent reported decreased sex drive, 10 percent gave up sex completely and 15 percent had suicidal thoughts. In the UK, it's largely been left to the HVA to fight the stigma of herpes, and many of its supporters are in long-term relationships thanks to its support and advice. They're only cold sores, and they go away without treatment – but without the HVA, the guilt would last a lot longer.

For further information and to make donations, see www.herpes.org.uk

*M.D.*

## SIGNAL FAILURES



# Volt farce

**LABOUR's announcement that it would like more of the Great Western mainline electrified is another example of the right transport decision at the wrong time.**

Transport secretary Andrew Adonis said electric trains "will offer faster journey times, more seats, greater reliability, improved air quality and lower carbon emissions than their diesel equivalents, as well as being cheaper to buy, operate and maintain". That's been well known for decades – but Labour didn't listen for 12 years.

The Tories immediately criticised Great Western electrification as "maxing out Network Rail's credit card, leaving the taxpayer to foot the bill". If they win the next election, the scheme could then be shelved while *they* take 12 years to understand how electrification pays for itself. The Tories have obviously dumped "vote blue, go green". For electrifying railways is one of the easiest ways to cut transport carbon emissions, using proven technology.

The government says that even with Britain's existing electricity sources (mainly fossil fuels), electric rail still emits 20 to 35 percent less carbon than diesel rail. But while claiming to take climate change seriously, Labour has presided over acquisition of hundreds more diesel trains (built to last 30 years). Even where tracks are electrified, the proportion of electric trains on them has fallen and redundant electric locomotives are now being exported to eastern Europe.

Britain's shambolic preparations for the Channel tunnel opening spent big sums on infrastructure that's now unused (Waterloo International anyone?) but the Department for Transport (DafT) learned nothing about planning. Two years ago, the rail white paper purported to provide a 30-year strategy for a "modern, sustainable railway" but managed to brush aside electrification because the "longer-term benefits are currently uncertain".

Even a five-year rail strategy is too much to expect. Network Rail's 2009-14 spending plan and funding were determined through mind-boggling bureaucracy (*Eye* 1217) but didn't include Great Western and Liverpool-Manchester electrification, which NR is now expected to progress before 2014.

Since 2005 DafT has also devoted resources to specifying a bizarre "Super Express" train that would run on electricity, diesel or both, ignoring warnings the technology would be costly because no other country has it. Great Western electrification would need ordinary electric trains but DafT's still pursuing Super Express; saving Whitehall face is apparently more important than saving money.

As *Eye* 1232 explained in March: "Logically Britain would electrify more lines and buy no more diesels... existing diesels, displaced by electrification, would provide extra capacity or replace old trains on remaining diesel lines." At long last, DafT says: "The previously-planned procurement by the government of new diesel trains has now been superseded" and a "new rolling stock plan" is needed – to replace the "rolling stock plan" it produced back in, er, 2008.

As recently as March, DafT actually wanted to buy more diesels. Private financiers wouldn't invest in yesterday's technology, so DafT created its own Diesel Trains Ltd company to buy 200 carriages. An independent expert would set the trains' lease rates. DafT published the expert's remit on 22 June – just a month before deciding new diesel trains aren't needed after all.

*'Dr B Ching'*

## ECO GNOMICS

**MORE on the ripples caused by Charles Clover's film about over-fishing, *The End of the Line* (*Eye* 1232).**

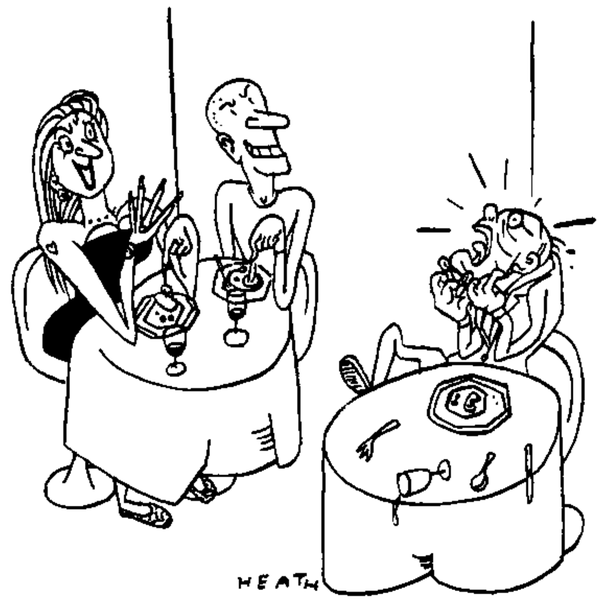
Retail chains like Pret-a-Manger and chefs such as Raymond Blanc have made progress in removing endangered seafood from their shelves and menus. But as we predicted, the consumer levy-funded UK Seafish Authority has responded with an urgent PR drive, rather than any behavioural change, appointing a new PR outfit in Glasgow, 3x1, to promote the industry's cause.

An agency briefing note leaked to Eco-Gnomics shows that the organisation's "single overarching objective" is to promote the message that the "UK seafood industry is committed to creating a sustainable future". 3x1's task is to push the message that the UK fishing industry is "alive, vibrant and has a strong future", along with the inevitable statistics about job creation and the sector's contribution to the economy.

Seafish also claims it wants to communicate about "the sale of bluefin tuna", the extinction of which is central to Clover's documentary. To say Seafish was late to the table on this would be to put it charitably. Until Clover's film and the media response to it caused widespread panic in the British seafood industry, Seafish had little or nothing to say about any endangered species, including the many that the UK industry it represents had over exploited for decades.

So will Seafish be supporting the ban on the trade of bluefin recently announced by UK fisheries minister Huw Irranca-Davies? Will the organization call for a ban on the sale of the endangered species by restaurants like Nobu, as the minister has done? Don't hold your breath.

If the agency fulfils its brief successfully (earning more than £120,000 in fees a year, with an additional £40,000 to spend on "advertorial"), expect more "fish and chip shop" competitions encouraging us to eat fish twice a week, and regular PR plugs for seafood as part of a "healthy and affordable" diet. In other words, fishy business as usual.




*"He's choking on the endangered tuna he ordered!"*

## JUST FANCY THAT!

"South West to be first low carbon economic area"

– Department of Energy and Climate Change press release, 15 July

"The PM and Lord Mandelson are in Sunderland today to announce that the North East will become the UK's first Low Carbon Economic Area."

– @downingstreet, the Official No10 Downing Street Twitter channel, 20 July

## ROTTEN BOROUGHS

# BLUE WALES

THE Labour party's cull of east London councillors has moved on to Newham, where around 20 out of 54 current members will not be standing next year.

So far seven have failed to get through the first stage of the selection process for candidates in the 2010 local elections and another dozen have decided to retire or step down for personal reasons. "Personal reasons" include being told to jump before they are pushed.

Their number includes many old hands who were promised an easy time by elected mayor "Sir" Robin Wales. Cabinet member Ian "Antisocial" Corbett – the man in charge of the borough's famous "Keystone Kops" parks constabulary until it was disbanded following a series of revelations in the *Eye* – was at first left off the panel but has been reinstated after an appeal.

Those deciding to "retire" include deputy mayor Christine Bowden, who had hoped to succeed Sir Robin, and cabinet member June Leitch. Both have fallen foul of a previously unobserved requirement that councillors should live in the borough they serve.

The axe has also fallen on Cllr Ayub Korom Ali, who spent several months last year campaigning to be an MP in Bangladesh (*Eye* 1225). Other reasons for deselection – by an panel composed of members from across London – include poor attendance, piss-poorness in general and, in one case, being generally pissed. Another turns out not to be a member of the Labour party.

London Labour party supremo Ken Clark tells the *Eye*: "Being a Labour councillor is not a job for life. No one will be nodded through." He is now turning his attention to neighbouring Tower Hamlets. And sharpening his knife.

# DUNE IN THE TRUMPS

LOVABLE billionaire Donald Trump has upset locals in Aberdeenshire by trying to take over yet more land to add to his proposed 1,400-acre golf resort cum hotel and holiday homes complex which will destroy an unspoiled stretch of coastline north of Aberdeen.

Trump has applied for planning permission to add the sites of four private homes and two other plots of land to the plan for his £1bn resort among the dunes at Balmedie, for which he already has outline permission.

Not all the owners are willing to sell, so the Trump Corporation has hinted that it may ask Aberdeenshire council to use compulsory purchase orders (CPOs). The council has not ruled this out, and says any such decision is likely to be considered in secret for reasons of "commercial confidentiality". CPOs are supposed to be made only if a project – such as a road, hospital or military installation – is considered to be "for the benefit of the general public". That Aberdeenshire might think the interests of the general public and the bouffant-haired tycoon could coincide is worrying.

This is not the first time Trump has attempted the compulsory purchase trick. In 1998 he tried to persuade the state of New Jersey to seize three properties – including the home of an elderly widow – that stood in the way of an expansion of the Trump Plaza Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City. In that case, a judge found for the residents. But perhaps Aberdeenshire will prove an easier touch than notoriously corrupt New Jersey.

**● MUCH distress among Greens in Oxfordshire, where the party was reduced from five to two seats on the county council in June. Specially peeved were candidates Nuala Young, who came in 12 votes behind her Labour rival in East Oxford, and Sushila Dhall, who was 128 votes adrift in West Central. Bad losers? What upsets the pair is the discovery that prior to the election hundreds of polling cards were not delivered to homes in Oxford. A card is not necessary to vote, but not all electors are aware of this. Young in particular believes the result could have been different had more cards been delivered. In Wolvercote and Summertown, in the north of the city, scores of cards were found in a skip. The electoral commission has asked the deputy returning officer, Oxford city council's head of legal & democratic services, Jeremy Thomas, to explain.**

# ON THE SQUARE

TORY freemason Bill Sharp has been suspended for two months from Castle Point council in Essex for calling its environment director "a fucking liar" and for trying to influence planning decisions on behalf of property developers, one of whom is a mason he has described as "my brother".

Sharp tried to attend a meeting to consider a planning application made by a company owned by a pension fund of which his friend Jack King was a trustee. When refused admission he assumed environment director Ian Burchill, with whom he had clashed before, was behind his exclusion, and was found in an office shouting down an internal phone to the council's monitoring officer: "Burchill is a fucking liar. I despise him. He's just doing this because he doesn't like me. He's a fucking idiot."

The council's standards committee also found that Sharp failed to declare that he was a friend of developer Gordon Sanders despite "a long social and business connection between [them]... additionally both men are active freemasons". At one point Sharp called Sanders "my brother".

Readers experiencing a sense of déjà vu may recall last issue's story about Cllr Peter Gore de-Vaux Balbirnie, who burst into the planning department of Tendring council and berated officers for "taking the piss" and shouted "this department is a fucking joke" because they had handled a planning application in a way he didn't approve of. We cannot find any other common

**Disability tests get tougher**

denominator, other than that both councils are in south Essex. Perhaps it is just the way they do things there.

**● THE Tories have paid the price in Skidrow-on-Sea for taking voters for granted. After do-nothing absentee councillor Paul Lainchbury was exposed in *Eye* 1235, he delayed his resignation long enough – nearly a month – to cast a crucial vote that ensured a Tory mayor, Ann Norman, was elected. The Tories then hoped to hang on to his seat at the subsequent by-election and, with the aid of the mayor's casting vote, to get their plans through the hung council. But electors, turned off by such cynicism, voted in the Greens' Alexandra Phillips by a thumping 352 majority on 23 July. The emasculated Tories are now outnumbered on the council by the combined opposition. The future suddenly looks rather less blue for Brighton's marginal parliamentary seats, which the Conservatives had high hopes of winning back after 13 years.**

# DROPPING A BULLOCK

AS THE *Eye* goes to press, council workers are mulling over the latest pay offer from local government bosses in England and Wales. The "final" offer from councils is 1 percent across the board – up from 0.5 percent—plus a further 0.25 percent for those on less than £13,700 a year.

Lewisham mayor Sir Steve Bullock is chair of the "human resources panel" at the Local Government Association (LGA), which represents nearly all local authorities in England and Wales. Onion in hand, he says: "The perfect storm of reduced income and increasing demands for services, combined with the low inflation rate, has meant that employers have to make some tough decisions on pay and spending... We have worked hard to help staff who deliver efficient public services to local people while ensuring that council spending does not rise above what is acceptable to local people."

Hmmm. Would "local people" find another piece of LGA advice, curiously omitted from Bullock's press statement, "acceptable"? In a memo circulated to all council chief executives in May, when council workers were being offered just 0.5 percent, the LGA advised that the going rate for increases in councillors' allowances should be a handsome 4.6 percent. Because they're worth it, innit.

**● DID taxpayers get value for money when Salford city council sponsored a "community engagement programme" that enabled a group of young dancers to meet Cuban ballet star Carlos Acosta at the Lowry Centre?**

**The all-too-brief encounter ended up costing £1,023 for each of the nine teenagers... when for £727 each they could have had seven nights at the four-star Oasis Brisas del Caribe hotel in Cuba instead, including return flights from Manchester, and then caught some ballet at the Gran Teatro de la Habana. Treble *mojitos* all round!**

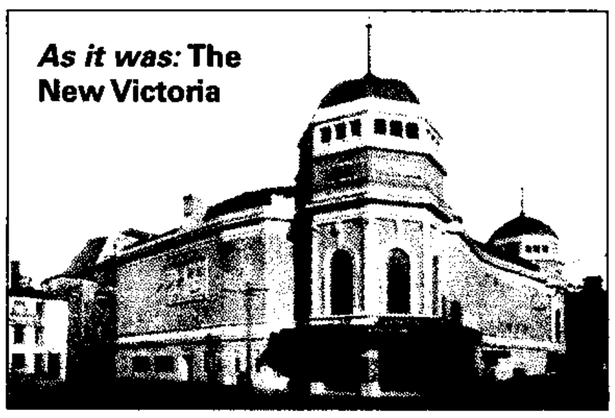
**IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON** KNIFE & PACKER

TO THINK PEOPLE COMPLAIN ABOUT THE EXCESSIVE NUMBERS OF WHEELIE BINS AND WASTE BOXES... RECYCLING IS HERE TO STAY – DEAL WITH IT!
TOO MANY BOXES? NOT ENOUGH MORE LIKE!
GOOD THING WE CROW-BARRED THE COUNCIL INTO GIVING US PERMISSION FOR SOME EXTRA BOXES...
CRIMSON FOR MALE GROOMING PRODUCTS, PINK FOR BONSAI TREE WASTE, YELLOW FOR USED ARTISTS MATERIALS...

# NOOKS and CORNERS

**THE former Bradford Odeon was once the third largest cinema in Britain. Designed by the local architect William Illingworth with exuberant domes reflecting that of the nearby Alhambra Theatre, it opened as the New Victoria in 1930 and contained a ballroom and restaurant as well as a 3,300 seat auditorium.**

Despite alterations, this survives and could be restored. But as I described in *Eye* 1217, since it finally closed in 2000, the building has been carefully neglected by its new owners, Yorkshire Forward, which hopes to build offices, flats and an hotel on the site. This has the support of Bradford council, even though its own replacement unitary development plan, adopted in 2005, states about the Odeon that, "ideally it should be refurbished and reused for leisure purposes".



***As it was:*** **The New Victoria**

This is what most Bradfordians seem to want and the Bradford Odeon Rescue Group (BORG) has campaigned against demolition, arguing that it could be made into a centre for conferences and concerts.

The latest redevelopment proposals, by Leeds architects Carey Jones, have just been put on display. These envisage some modish wobbly glazed blocks which could be anywhere, their only merit being that they rise only to eight storeys rather than the 13 once proposed. But what has surprised and infuriated many is that English Heritage has performed another *volte-face*.

A year ago Trevor Mitchell, EH's team leader for West Yorkshire, stated that although the Odeon was not of listable quality (we might disagree), it "makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, so there should be a presumption in favour of its retention". Furthermore, the redevelopment scheme "does not meet… council policy aspirations for high quality design".

But now EH thinks that: "The revised proposal respects the setting of adjacent listed buildings and provides new buildings of an appropriate quality… safeguarding the character of the city conservation area" and accepts the developer's dubious claim that the Odeon's domed towers and main façade cannot be retained. Perhaps Mr Mitchell might tell the people of Bradford what made him change his mind.

The real problem in Bradford though is its council. Bradford was once a proud and independent Victorian city; but with the decline of the wool industry came the usual hatred of the past and the obsession with comprehensive redevelopment and road building. The result was that, in the 1960s and 70s, the centre of Bradford was largely destroyed. The replacement buildings – what Betjeman called "international nothingness" – were so mediocre that many have since had to be replaced. And now the council wants to make the same mistakes again.

As well as acquiescing in the destruction of decent, popular buildings like the Odeon, it has allowed a developer, Westfield, to clear a large area of the city centre and then do nothing with the site. And its idea for urban regeneration is to wheel in that posturing boor, Will Alsop, to create a large pond in front of City Hall (*Eyes passim*).

In March, the Bradford Civic Society held a public meeting to discuss the lack of public consultation of the council's plans. This has led to the publication of a plan for the city, *"Common Sense" Regeneration*. One contributor, Prof Alan Carling of the University of Bradford, notes the council's penchant for grandiose schemes, usually involving "Ground Zero thinking" planned by outside consultants. "This amounts to a pathology – an inferiority complex, maybe – in which local views and local people count for very little, whereas external experts, who know next to nothing about Bradford, are received with rapt attention".

Now that it has proved so contradictory, perhaps the advice of English Heritage should be received with less attention and the opinions of those Bradfordians who want to retain the Odeon with rather more.

***REGARDING the British Museum's North West Development proposals (Eye 1241), it is now clear that the disgraceful*** **volte-face** ***by beleaguered English Heritage was prompted by the Department of Culture Media 'n' Sport's willingness to put up money to spoil the historic buildings on the site.***

***But now, happily, everything has changed. Camden council, to its credit, has just refused permission to plans by Rogers Stirk Harbour & Partners, as, "After careful consideration the committee decided that the proposed benefits of the scheme did not outweigh their concerns about the design within its context". And even if Milord Rogers now pulls all available strings to overturn this decision, it now looks unlikely his firm's scheme will go ahead as it cannot be paid for. It has recently emerged that the DCMS now has a £100m "shortfall" in its capital budget, so the £22.5m earmarked for the British Museum is likely to be cut.***

***Another casualty may well be the gratuitous extension that Tate Modern hopes to build (Eye 1164). But no tears need be shed that the era of museum expansion with extravagant "iconic" buildings designed by fashionable superstars is coming to an end. Most museums and galleries are quite big enough – not least Tate Modern. If the British Museum still wants to build the new exhibition gallery it certainly needs, the trustees should scale down their aspirations – and hire a decent, sensitive architect. They do exist.***

*'Piloti'*

## YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS

BY BIRCH

What a brilliant hoax! "Yuri and Konstantin Shamanov" are really Jake and Dinos Chapman!
OREL ART
GOODNEWS!
RUSSIAN CONTEMPORARY ART
And they fooled everyone into thinking they're important artists!
Er...

## I-SPY

*Yorkshire.*

**Submitted by Jane Sleightholme.**

£10 paid for similar submissions.

*(SAE required for return of photographs)*

## Swineballs

"Why not experience a little swine flu-related relief to ease the strain of the pandemic? Are you aware of this pretty, indulgent hand wash that can make swine-flu fighting just that bit more stylish?"

*– Press release to beauty editors for "Simply Roses Savon de Marseille, £9.95", from Brand PR*

**"Swine Flu – we've got the answers to your many questions…**

**Q**: Is it true that it is a man-made virus that has been created by the Government? (Joe Rollett, 21, of Bakewell Street, Derby)

**A**: Mr Sandys: 'No, it is not man-made and no, it is not a Government conspiracy. It is a pain to me, to NHS Derby City, and to the NHS overall, just as it is to the individuals who have got it.'"

– **Derby Telegraph**, *31 July*

"**Q:** If I have the misfortune to catch swine flu, is my devoted pet at risk?

**A:** The virus is infectious from human to human and also from human to pigs, but that's it. Dogs and cats don't get it."

*– 'Pet Subjects' column,*
**Daily Telegraph**, *30 July*

"Devon Primary Care Trust and Exeter City Council have moved to play down fears after it emerged that plans had been drawn up to use the city's ancient catacombs as a site for a temporary mortuary. A council spokesman said the measure would only be necessary in the 'worst case scenario'. *Echo* readers have been reacting to the news. Bob Twilliger from Exeter said: 'I do hope this is a wind-up. It's not like we're back in medieval times'."

– **Exeter Express and Echo**, *28 July*

"A drink-driver who claimed that swine flu made her body more susceptible to alcohol has lost her case… Judge Phillips commented: 'Swine flu seems to be the "in" submission for everything at the moment. I reject all that.' Karen Graham was fined $550 and disqualified from driving for six months."

– **New Zealand Herald**, *28 July*

"A defendant who claimed to have swine flu was sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment after failing to turn up to court for his trial. Judge Richard Bray ruled the trial should go ahead in his absence. He said: 'I am well aware a large proportion of defendants charged with drugs offences do not turn up if they are on bail and this is another one. If I adjourned for every application for someone who says they've got swine flu, we would never do any justice at all'."

– **Northampton Chronicle and Echo**, *30 July*

"Tests have confirmed that swine flu has broken out at a piggery in the central west of New South Wales. It is the first case of the virus among pigs in Australia and the State Government believes the animals probably caught the disease from workers."

– **ABC News**, *Australia, 31 July*

# Letters

## Doctors write

*Sir,*

*Re Boar Flu, "A Doctor writes", Eye 1240.*

*This is the most balanced information that I have seen published about swine flu – I am going to scan it, laminate it and show it to my patients.*

*Yours sincerely,*
*DR JAYNE L.M. DONEGAN,*
*London NW4.*

*Sir,*

*I'm rather concerned I'm not getting enough information on flu at present. Does anyone else know of any other organisations that could inform us of their views? I really feel that the PCT, the RCGP, the LMC, BMA, DoH, HPA, BBC and NHS Confederation are simply not fully informing me.*

*I'm currently relying on your reliable organ for the latest position, as I'm sure your best advice is: 1. Don't panic. 2. We're all gonna die. 3. Er... that's it.*

*A G.P.,*
*Yorkshire.*

## Lookalike

**Gary Peach**

**Honey Monster**

*Sir,*

*It took me a while, but I have just realised who that beardy weirdy space boffin Gary Peach (who takes credit for Neil Armstrong's "One small step" speech) really is! I wonder if he has taken his wife on a "Honey Moon"? I will see myself out.*

*Best regards,*
*CHRIS SPEIGHT,*
*Via email.*

## Note of caution

*Sir,*

*Re Medicine Balls, Eye 1241. No doubt M.D.'s cheerfully blithe recommendation of Gardasil will, by now, have prompted hundreds of indignant letters from the usual assortment of ant-vaccination fruit-juice drinkers. Despite your likely distaste for such company, it is, however, worth looking at the US experience of this controversial vaccine for 11-to-12-year-old girls – 47 deaths and over 8,000 official reports of adverse reactions (in previously healthy girls) submitted to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) since its approval in 2006 (see Judicial Watch Special Report, 30 June 2008).*

*Also worthy of note is that Gardasil is the most expensive vaccine ever recommended by the FDA, earning Merck, Gardasil's manufacturer, about $1.5bn per annum. This follows an unusually aggressive lobbying campaign prior to the vaccine's introduction.*

*Best,*
*NICK HEWES,*
*Skipton, N. Yorks.*

## Putting the wind up

*Sir,*

*Ioan Richard needs to revisit his GCSE Physics notes, as he confuses momentum and energy in his anti-windpower rant. Momentum is indeed mass x velocity, but wind turbines generate electricity by employing not momentum but the **kinetic energy** of wind, which is mass x the **square** of the velocity, a rather larger quantity. He may or may not have a point about wind energy being a crap energy source, but he fatally undermines it through such an elementary error.*

*Yours,*
*FRED RILEY,*
*Via email.*

*Sir,*

*For those of you who might be interested, without subsidies – and accounting for that fact that wind, waves and tide are all intermittent – wind power costs anywhere from 15 per cent to 60 per cent more than gas-fired power. Tidal power is three to four times as expensive as wind; wave power up to eight times as expensive. The principal problem is that it takes a lot of engineering to survive the sea – as Councillor Richard (for it is presumably he) would know if he tried to stand on the end of Porthcawl Breakwater in a storm instead of sitting at home hammering out complaint letters about wind turbines with one finger.*

*Yours,*
*MICHAEL LIEBREICH,*
*London W11.*

*Sir,*

*Although I agree with much of what Ioan Richard said in his letter with regard to windmills, I must disagree with him on one point.*

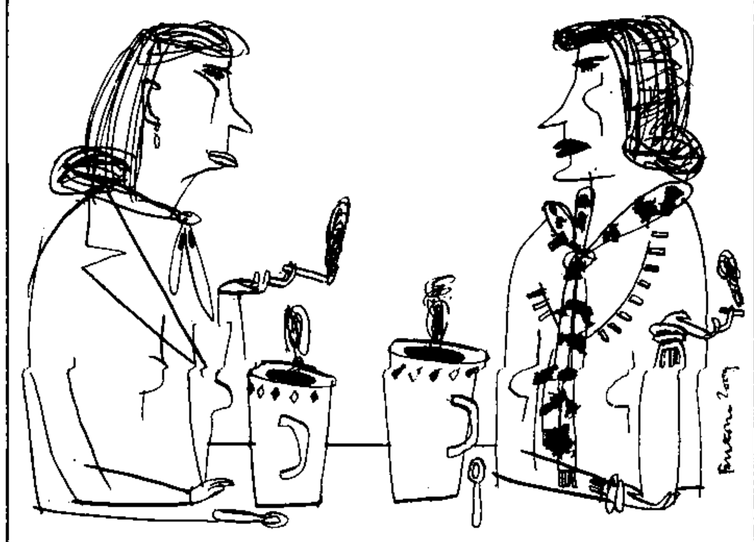
*The ancient windmills he refers to in Holland, Norfolk and Anglesey were not for the purpose of milling grain. No doubt some were, but the majority were not windmills but wind-pumps used for pumping water from the drainage ditches into the waterways to reclaim the land for agriculture.*

*These wind-pumps became derelict as they were replace with motorised pumping stations.*

*The irony of this is clear as you drive along the A47 from Norwich to Yarmouth. You can see across the flat landscape the remains of many of these wind-pumps. On arrival at Yarmouth you are greeted by the sight, out at sea, of a massive wind farm generating electricity to drive the pumping stations that replaced the windmills.*

*Yours,*
*BRUCE BRANDON,*
*Via email.*

## Scenes You Seldom See



*"I do look forward to the summer holidays when our nanny goes home and I have the kids to look after"*

## Radio waves

*Sir,*

*It has been brought to my attention, and to the attention of my colleagues here on the "Up All Night" programme, that your magazine has seen fit to pass comment on the award of an MBE to one of our presenters, Dotun Adebayo (Eye 1241).*

*I can only speak for the team that was on air with Dotun when the news broke back in June and I can tell you that I heard not one hoot of derision that night about the award. We were delighted that his contribution to publishing and broadcasting was recognised in this way.*

*Working with Dotun over several years and across a couple of programmes ("Up All Night" and "Brief Lives") has always been a pleasant experience; his enthusiasm and genuine good humour makes him a delight to produce.*

*As to your last statement "the most two faced among them still felt able to toast Adebayo's success with lashings of champagne at the licence fee payers expense", it is wrong on three counts. I didn't see one face there in that studio that morning that wasn't genuinely pleased for the man, one bottle of cava is not "lashings" and it was paid for out of a colleague's pocket, no licence fee payers should feel aggrieved on that account.*

*For a moment I considered cancelling my subscription, then I remembered I don't have one.*

*Yours most sincerely,*
*ADAM ROSSER,*
*Producer, "Up All Night".*

## Pedantry Corner

*... Either John Gribble's revered Latin master (Pedantry Corner, Eye 1241) was not quite up to the job, or rust has infected his recollection of the language. **Nemine contradicente** is no gerundival expression, but rather an ablative absolute constructed with a present participle. The genitive (**neminis**) and ablative (**nemine**) forms of nemo are rare, but attested from several authors including Plautus, Suetonius and Tacitus.*

*JEAN CLOUD.*

*... Further to I. T. Williams' letter (Pedantry Corner, Eye 1241), I could never understand why Colin Bean had such a small part in "Dad's Army". He was a great actor. As a stage hand I saw him as a pantomime dame at Watford. He was one of the last of the old style dames before "ambivalence" crept in. He and Gilda Perry, wife of James, as the principal boy, were superb together.*

*MARTIN EDWARDS.*

*... In Eye 1241 one of your contributors joined the recent trend amongst hacks to use the word "coruscating" as if it means damning or savage. Derived from the Latin verb **corusco**, the word actually means glittering or sparkling.*

*It seems to me that journalists, even on supposedly literate broadsheets, are increasingly mistaking it for "excoriating". Don't they learn you Classics any more in them posh schools you attend?*

*MARK HONE.*

*... Re Earwig's peanut brittle cartoon on page 11 (Eye 1241). In fact, a nut allergy doesn't necessarily prevent the sufferer from enjoying peanuts, which are legumes (part of the pea family) rather than true nuts.*

*DAVID McMAHON.*

*Most fish sold by fish shops "tend to be healthy" writes Mr Gordon Hawker (Eye 1241). They are not healthy. They are dead.*

*KEITH FARR.*

## Lookalike

**John Bercow**

**Tom Daly**

*Sir,*

*I couldn't help noticing the striking resemblance that exists between the new Speaker of the Commons and our country's young champion diver. Is there something about Mr Bercow's past that we need to know about?*

*GARY WILLIAMS,*

*London SE16.*

## Classical gas

*Sir,*

*Classic FM does over-promote itself; however, the work it does in the classical music world is invaluable and has breathed new life into it. The CD you mention is misnamed. It would be more appropriate for it to be called "Made known to millions by Classic FM" as that is what the station has done. You and I already knew Zadok the Priest and other popular classics, but the younger generation needs to be introduced to great music in a fresh and relevant way without gimmicks and as do many more senior members of our society.*

*Regards,*
*JORDAN MARSHALL,*

*Via email.*

*Sir,*

*As an independent classical music retailer in Harrogate (albeit in a small way) may I congratulate you on your 'Lunchtime O'Boulez' article (issue 1238) in which you take Classic FM to task for claiming to make famous music that has been well known and loved for many years.*

*Whilst Classic FM may indeed have introduced some listeners to classical music, to claim credit for making famous such standard repertoire as Mozart's clarinet concerto and Vaughan Williams' "Lark Ascending" is shameless aggrandizement. Whilst commercial reality dictates some of what I stock, I drew the line at this one.*

*Yours,*
*GEOFF WEBBER,*

*Harrogate.*

*Sir,*

*In a letter to his father, Mozart describes his piano concertos 12-14 as such: "There are passages here and there from which the connoisseurs alone can derive satisfaction; but these passages are written in such a way that the less learned cannot fail to be pleased, though without knowing why." In short, suitable for both the toffee-nosed music snob and the Classic FM pleb (letter from Gary Kester, Eye 1241).*

*And Mozart is certainly not alone in appealing to both the high- and low-brow; names such as Handel, Chopin and Mendelssohn spring to mind (all quite at home on CFM). The fundamental error of CFM, however, is to assume that everything written for the orchestra becomes "classical music", be it the film music of John Williams or the aural saccharin of Karl Jenkins.*

*Although music such as this has its rightful place, it is not cheek by jowl with Mozart et alia; it is this juxtaposition that offends the ear of toffee-nosed music snobs like myself and, I suspect, Ms Lewington (Eye 1240).*

*Mozart continues: "In order to win applause one must write stuff which is so inane that a coachman could sing it". Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*

*Yours,*
*PHILIP BEER,*

*Via email.*

## Tour de farce

*Sir,*

*What exactly is the point of the Tour de France "joke" on page 23 of the current issue (1241)?*

*This year's race has been rather dramatic thus far, with the highly publicised return of Lance Armstrong, some infighting between favourites in the same teams, terrific mountain stages and some excellent performances from our own people (with Wiggins on target for the highest ever overall finish by a Brit [he came fourth], and Cavendish winning four stages as well as being robbed of the green jersey).*

*Perhaps you are bored by the Tour because of the year round blanket coverage of cycling on television, as opposed to niche sports such as football, golf and rugby which rate barely a mention.*

*MATT SHORT,*

*Via email.*

## Warts and awe

*Sir,*

*Thanks for publishing the link to Chester Sexual Health in the on-line version of the Eye. Expecting to review some horrifying statistics on infection rates, I was instead faced with pictures of horrifying genitalia. Hats off (which really should be "hats on") for the promotion of good sexual practice but a warning to use discretion would have been useful. It provided more afternoon entertainment for my work colleagues than I cared for.*

*I think I will buy the Eye from now on, instead of getting it in snatches.*

*Yours very sincerely,*
*M. HOLDEN,*

*Manchester.*

## Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

*"Let's not take our bridges before they've been erected."*

**BOB AINSWORTH, Radio 4**
(Ken Bowker)

*"The incredible is always hard to believe."*

**SUPT ANTHONY McWHIRTER, Metro**
(Prof. Ian McNay)

*"Did your great-grandfather have any children?"*

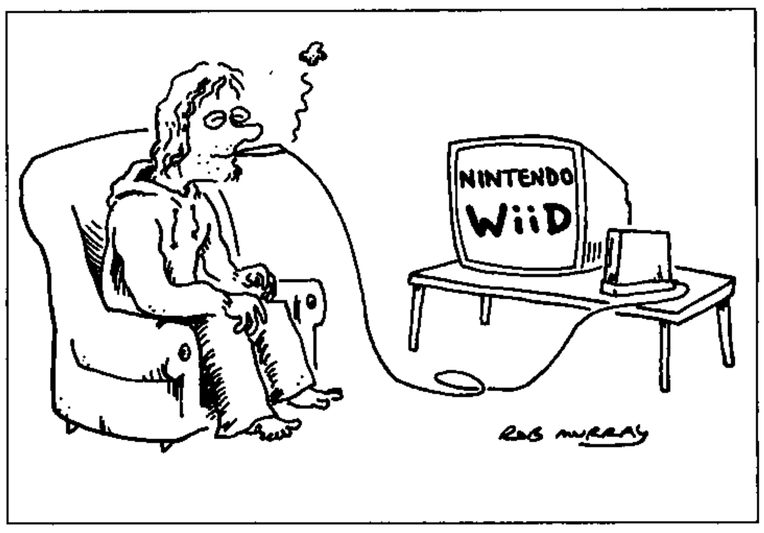
**FERN BRITTON, ITV1**
(Francis Harvey)

*"These players are under the thumb of the microscope."*

**PHIL TUFNELL, TMS**
(Steve Harvey)

*"Are they putting their finger on the nail here?"*

**SHELAGH FOGARTY, Radio 5 Live**
(John Walker)




## Pseudo Names

*... I hate to be negative, but Pseudo Names is rubbish.*

*NOAH FENCE.*

*... Have you noticed that "Pseudo Names" is an anagram of "P. Mandelson"?*

*NOAH TISSENT.*

*... This column thing, yeah? It's like, you know, well cool. Respec',*

*NOAH AMIN.*

*... Eric Nerny was spot on in recalling the great comic duos of yesteryear. We would also like to mention that even the second- and third-rate double acts of the past would probably have appreciated Pseudo Names.*

*CANON N. BALL*
*LEE TELL*
*N. LARGE.*

*... We cannot understand why some readers do not like Pseudo Names. We think they are not just a classic genre, but pure poetry!*

*IVAN DURD*
*LORNE LEE*
*ASA CLOUD.*

*... We understand that there are certain people who think ill of your Pseudo Names feature, considering it puerile, a waste of space, etc. Well, we think something really bad should happen to those people.*

*HONEY SWATKEY*
*MAL E. PONCE.*

*... Some of the contributors to Pseudo Names seem to have a spelling problem. Can I help?*

*PRUE FREADER.*

*... I've written hundreds of letters to Pseudo Names and you've not printed any of them. You haven't even sent me an acknowledgement or regret. Well, I've had enough. I'm going to throw myself under a train and then you'll be sorry!*

*HUGH BASTARDS.*

*... Here in China, we just ignore the Pseudo Names letters.*

*WOK-ON BAI.*

*... I think you should be aware that we are monitoring your Pseudo Names column for any sign of homophobia.*

*LES, BEA, ANN & GAY WRIGHTS.*

*... Is it not time to return to serious journalism and stop pandering to the baser tastes of your readership?*

*LOIS DENOMINATOR.*

*... Given the popularity of your Pseudo Names section, I wonder if I could use it to promote the valuable work that I and fellow members of the House of Lords are undertaking through the all-party Parliamentary Thailand Group?*

*LADY BOYES.*

*... Perhaps Benny Dorm, Bill Bough and Liz Bun could advise us what to bring on our hols?*

*BUCK HEAD*
*ANNE SPAID.*

● Those Pseudo Names in full – www.private-eye.co.uk

## Letter from **Monrovia**

*from Our Own Correspondent*

**FORGET Saddam and Milosevic. For wacky soundbites and playing to the gallery, Charles McCarthur Ghankay Taylor, former president of Liberia, is the best ticket on the war criminal circuit.**

Despite accusations of gun-running and sponsored mayhem made by prosecutors at the Special Court for Sierra Leone in the Hague, our huckster will not be apologizing. Instead he will tirelessly point out that there are many here in Liberia and elsewhere, allies and adversaries, who did as much to wreck his homeland. Some of us in Monrovia agree.

Taylor's appearance in court was well-timed. Our own truth and reconciliation commission *(TRC), modelled on* those in South Africa and our troubled neighbour, Sierra Leone, had just put out its report: a review of more than 20 years of civil war and routine brutality, comprising more than 22,000 written statements and more than 500 live public testimonies. Brothers and sisters who were raped and brutalized testified. So too did some of our more infamous warlords, now repentant.

Forgotten luminaries General Butt Naked and Arab Devil have now both found God and answer to more conventional names. The once fearsome General Peanut Butter is now Senator Adolphus Dolo, joined in parliament by Prince Yomi Johnson, who once gloried in the slaughter but is now a friend of Jesus. Another upright citizen is the once frightening Al Haji Kromah, now lecturing in, er, public relations and running a website.

The TRC report would like to see the arch-perpetrators of violence up before a proper tribunal. But it is for the government and legislature to make the appropriate moves. Can we expect bold legislation, denunciations, arrests and prosecutions? Probably not. The TRC may talk of justice and reparations, but those who destroyed our nation know the legal path will be long, exhausting and possibly counter-productive. If there should be a knock on the door, they will make appropriate contingencies.

And what of our sainted, septuagenarian head of state, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf? Tempting as it is to blame the horrors of the 1990s on the colourful eccentricities of pyschopaths and opportunists, it was the failure over generations of our apparently more civilized leaders that allowed such havoc to spread.

Amid the TRC's blood-stained charge sheets was a proposed 30-year ban from public office for Madam President, one of "the financiers and political leaders of the different warring factions". A misguided sympathy for the younger Taylor and a helpful cash advance in the early days of his insurrection some 20 years ago have come back to haunt Ellen. "I feel it in my conscience. I feel it every day," she told the tribunal in February.

Ellen will stay and probably stand again in the 2011 elections. While she is feted by the IMF, the World Bank and the UN, who prattle admiringly about better schools, promising growth rates and her stand on corruption, not all Liberians are so smitten. Not when most of us live on less than a dollar a day, which isn't enough for our daily rice.

While many suffer, a few prosper, including some of Ellen's ministerial appointees, never slow to feather their nests outside the country. Meanwhile, Charlie and his lawyers will continue to stir the pot at The Hague. With so much international outrage mustered against him, odds are the court will not let our boy go free. But prison will not be some dismal dungeon; rather a UK facility designated by Her Majesty's government. Other presidents have fared worse. William Tolbert was gunned down in the presidential mansion during the coup of 1980. Then again, William Tubman expired peacefully in a London clinic in 1976. Would our Charles settle for such a quiet departure?

# FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

"Alzheimer sufferers spend a lot of the day wandering about, searching for a purpose," Odette Crawford of the Cleveland View Care Centre in Middlesbrough told reporters, "and they feel lost in long featureless corridors. We wanted to improve conditions for residents, so we transformed the second floor of the centre to give them a more stimulating environment. There's a pretend pub, a fake café, a cinema, a garden, and a hairdressers, all accessible from this fake bus stop, which has been our greatest success.

"Before the bus stop was brought in, Alzheimer sufferers would say over and over again that they wanted to go home, and nothing could distract them. But now when they say they are looking for their husband or parents, they can go and wait on a bench at the bus stop. It eases their frustration, knowing that there is somewhere they can go. It stimulates conversation with other residents, and after a few minutes they have forgotten why they are there, and focus on something else. The atmosphere is much calmer now." *(The Northern Echo, 26/5/09. Spotter: Anon)*

– o –

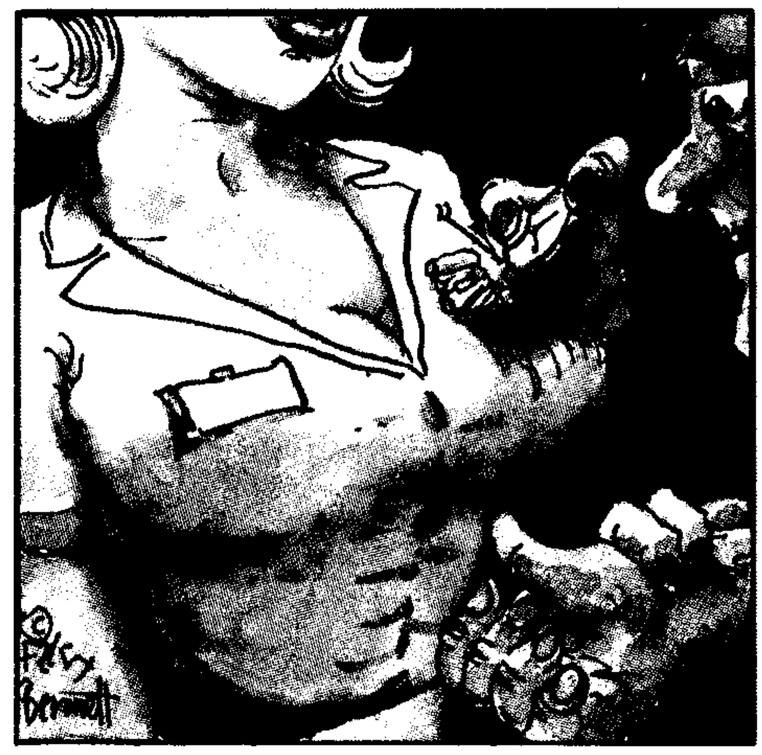
*"The idea of using condoms in the manufacture of hockey sticks came to me five years ago," Sanjay Kohli of R.K. Sports told a press conference, "after a large number of sticks began to get damaged. The hook is the most important part of the stick, because it is used to strike the ball, but it's also the most vulnerable part, because it's made from seven pieces of mulberry wood that are bound and glued together. We used to paste a plastic net onto the hook to prevent it splitting, but once the net perished, the stick could not be repaired. It was causing me nightmares.*

*"One day, I bought a box of condoms, and slipped one over the hook. The results were tremendous. After I'd heated it, the condom gripped the wood much better than the nets ever did, and was much longer lasting. It sounds absurd and embarrassing to be using condoms in the manufacture of sports goods, but it's been a wise decision, because a lot of expensive mulberry wood was going to waste. The only problem I had was with the local condom supplier, because we were buying so many that he thought we must have opened a brothel in the neighbourhood. He refused to keep selling us box after box until I invited him to the factory to show him how it's done. He's promised to keep the technique a secret until I have obtained a patent."* (The Telegraph [Calcutta], 4 /9/07. Spotter: Beeve Gourd)

– o –

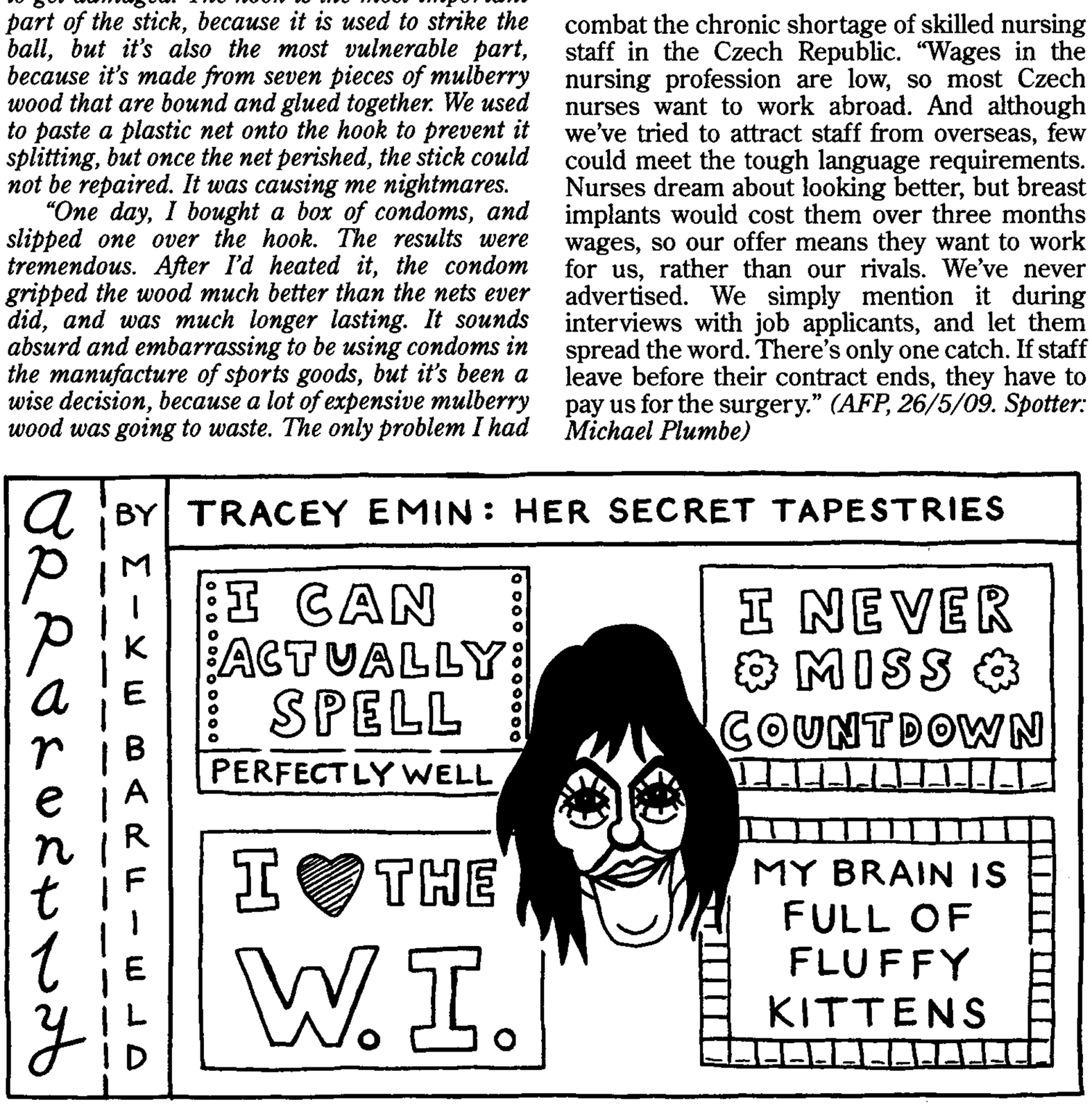
"For years I'd wanted a perfect stomach and breasts," thirty-one-year-old Nurse Petra Kalivodova told reporters at the Iscare clinic in Prague, "but plastic surgery is nowhere near cheap. So when the clinic offered me free breast implants and liposuction if I signed a three-year contract with them, it was the ideal solution to my financial situation. After I'd signed, I mentioned the offer to other nurses, and they all wanted to work here too. The interest is huge, and if I want more surgery in three years time, I'll certainly ask to renew my contract."

The clinic's director, Jiri Schweitzer, later explained that he had introduced the scheme to



combat the chronic shortage of skilled nursing staff in the Czech Republic. "Wages in the nursing profession are low, so most Czech nurses want to work abroad. And although we've tried to attract staff from overseas, few could meet the tough language requirements. Nurses dream about looking better, but breast implants would cost them over three months wages, so our offer means they want to work for us, rather than our rivals. We've never advertised. We simply mention it during interviews with job applicants, and let them spread the word. There's only one catch. If staff leave before their contract ends, they have to pay us for the surgery." *(AFP, 26/5/09. Spotter: Michael Plumbe)*

*Apparently* BY MIKE BARFIELD


TRACEY EMIN: HER SECRET TAPESTRIES
I CAN ACTUALLY SPELL PERFECTLY WELL
I NEVER MISS COUNTDOWN
I ♥ THE W.I.
MY BRAIN IS FULL OF FLUFFY KITTENS

# PRIME MINISTERIAL DECREE NO. 50

## From the Blackberry of the Rt Hon Lord Mandelson of Where You Live, Supreme First Secretary and Supreme Deputy Supreme Leader, Commissar for Business, Industry and Everything Else (for full list of Comrade Lord Mandelson's titles, see website)

Comrades,

In the absence of the Supreme Leader on the well-earned recreational break which I advised him to take in light of his understandable stress-induced emotional and mental instability, it falls to me to address you all on the latest achievements of the Party.

As Party officials and members of the Politburo head for their dachas for the annual summer rest and recuperation period, it is my task to remind you all of the many great leaps forward that the Party has made since the Supreme Leader had the wisdom to entrust me with the running of the country on behalf of you all, wherever you live (which, of course, I know).

These triumphs are as follows:

- **The economy**: the recession ended and stability restored, with not more than two million jobs lost.
- **Swine flu**: successfully contained.
- **Afghanistan**: the major victory won by our heroic troops will shortly lead to historic peace talks with moderate members of the Taliban identified by Comrade Miliband.
- **Schools, hospitals**: still there, despite attempt by Cameronite-Govist saboteurs to close them down.
- **Elimination of corrupt practices by some workers' representatives in the Supreme Soviet**: no sooner was it brought to my attention that parasitical elements had been exploiting the parliamentary allowances system than we acted decisively to ensure that such practices would no longer be tolerated and be replaced with a scheme with a different name, the SCAM (Supreme Consolidated Allowance Mechanism).
- **Low-carbon economy**: millions of "green" jobs are on the way to being created by the new People's Electric Car, powered by thousands of windfarms built by Comrades from overseas, in their desire to see the British economy placed on a fully-sustainable footing.
- **Climate change**: the menace of global warming is already in rapid retreat, as the pleasantly cool and wet summer shows the earth's climate responding to the measures we have already taken.

On the basis of this magnificent record, I am proposing the introduction at the next election of televised "debates" between the Supreme Leader and the so-called leader of the reactionary Bullingdonian-Toryist claque, Comrade Cameron, assuming of course that the neo-elitist Etonian Twattite Twitterist Cameron is prepared to face public humiliation by participating in such a debate.

Of course, it may be that the Supreme Leader himself is too modest to wish to take part in such a trifling exercise, and may wish to appoint in his place a popular, immensely capable, witty, charming, suave debater who will do the job rather more effectively than him.

Do Comrades have any idea who such a man might be?

P.M (pp. G.B.)

## From the Desk of the Supreme Leader Which Comrade Harriet Harperson, Deputy Supreme Leader Is Sitting At On A Temporary Basis

Comrades and Comradesses,

I draw attention once again to the lack of equality in the senior echelons of the Party, with women being denied their rightful place at the very top except in August.

We have seen the results of chauvinistsic Brownite-Mandelsonian-Ballsism. Left to themselves, men and their male testosterone-fuelled politics can be relied on to create disasters – as we have also seen in the banking crisis where Fred-Shredism has been allowed to run riot and indeed he has been allowed to run away to the South of France – a true running dog if ever there was one, Comrades!

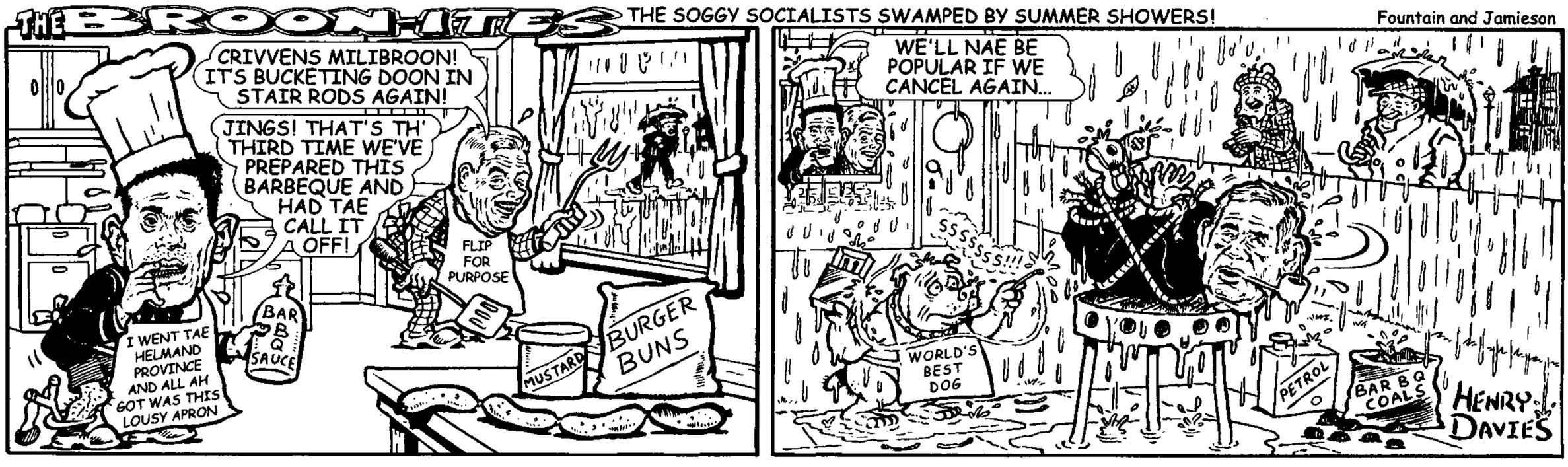
So much for the allegation that I am humourless! This shows that women can make jokes which are just as funny as those made by men, particularly Comrade Brown, who has many qualities, but a sense of humour is not one of them!

And I say this with the greatest respect for our current Supreme Leader, as he takes a necessary break from the perhaps too onerous duties of being in charge and not being a woman.

I hope he enjoys the well-deserved rest and, should Comrade Brown wish to extend his leave indefinitely, he can rest assured that the country is in safe, female hands.

Yours,

H.H.


THE BROONITES
THE SOGGY SOCIALISTS SWAMPED BY SUMMER SHOWERS!
Fountain and Jamieson
CRIVVENS MILIBROON! IT'S BUCKETING DOON IN STAIR RODS AGAIN!
JINGS! THAT'S TH' THIRD TIME WE'VE PREPARED THIS BARBEQUE AND HAD TAE CALL IT OFF!
I WENT TAE HELMAND PROVINCE AND ALL AH GOT WAS THIS LOUSY APRON
BAR B Q SAUCE
FLIP FOR PURPOSE
MUSTARD
BURGER BUNS
WE'LL NAE BE POPULAR IF WE CANCEL AGAIN...
SSSSSSS!!!
WORLD'S BEST DOG
PETROL
BAR BQ COALS
HENRY DAVIES

Advertisement

New from the Disaster Catalogue

**With holiday in mind...**

*Gordon is modelling the Out of Office range:*

- ☐ Economic straitjacket
- ☐ Lost shirt
- ☐ Trousers with no upturn
- ☐ Pull-in belt
- ☐ Scottish brogues

*All yours for £2 trillion (payable by your great-grandchildren)*

The Daily Terrorgraph

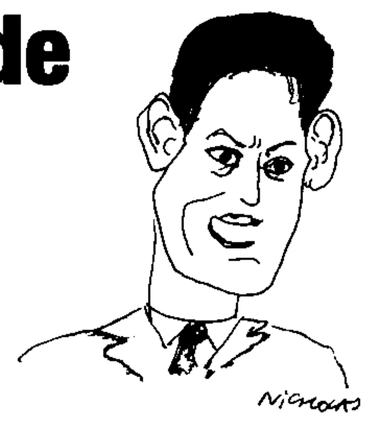
# Why we must fight on in Afghanistan

THERE has been a lot of criticism of our mission in Afghanistan. People ask what we are hoping to achieve, whether our tactics are correct and whether it is worth the loss of life to continue.

But if you ignore these arguments, one only has to look at the appalling way in which the enemy treats its own people to konw that we in the Taliban must win at all costs.

This week we learn that they do not even respect the human rights of their own soldiers, refusing to compensate them for their injuries in the field and *(That's enough, Ed.)*

## The Miliband Guide To Spotting A Moderate Taliban



### 10 Telltale Signs

1. Only wears small beard.
2. Only carries small bomb.
3. Only met Osama bin Laden once.
4. Only prays four times a day instead of five.
5. Wives only have to follow three paces behind him not four.
6. Reads Guardian and votes Lib Dem.
7. Likes cricket and looks forward to Afghanistan playing at Lords.
8. Likes occasional G&T with his pork scratchings.
9. Admirer of Jeremy Clarkson's Top Gear.
10. Has never committed suicide.

*(That's enough. Ed.)*

*"Putting his telescope to his blind eye, Mr Brown said, 'I see plenty of helicopters' "*

## That Official Government Guide for Civil Servants Wanting to Use Twitter in Full

❶ Arrive at work.

❷ Sit at your desk and shuffle documents around to give off the impression you're actually doing some work.

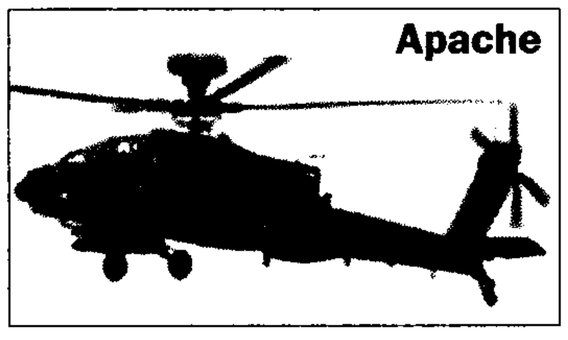
❸ Log on to Twitter.

❹ Spend rest of morning reading what Jonathan Ross and Alan Carr had for breakfast, plus details of Stephen Fry's 'splendiferous bowel movements'.

❺ Receive 'tweet' from line manager warning you about inappropriate use of social networking sites during office hours.

❻ Turn off computer and do some work.

## THE AFGHAN TRIBES: A GUIDE



## *'Why Don't People Like Me? Is It My Moustache?' Asks Hitler*

by Bob Ainsworth

**DEFENCE supremo Adolf Hitler yesterday told the Eye that he was baffled by his widespread unpopularity.**

"What is it about me that upsets people so much?" he asked.

"Is it my record running unpopular military operations during the war? Or is it my moustache?" *(cont. p. 94)*

**ON OTHER PAGES:** Win a free **Bob Ainsworth** Novelty Moustache and amuse your friends and family! Ideal for Summer Barbecue Fun! Just answer the following question: ***"Is Defence Secretary Bob Ainsworth even worse than Geoff Hoon?"*** ☐YES ☐YES

*"Er...darling, the tattooist's arrived"*

Daily Mail
FRIDAY, AUGUST 7, 2009

# IT'S RAINING!

## Government Warns: Millions Will Get Wet

by Our Weather Staff
**Michael Fishfinger**

**MILLIONS of Britons were shocked yesterday when, without warning, large quantities of water fell out of the sky on top of their heads.**

The streets immediately filled with what the Met Office described as "puddles", creating a hazard for motorists, cyclists, pedestrians and other street users.

Health and safety officials warned that old people and toddlers were particularly at risk from this "rain", which is making surfaces slippery and hazardous.

They were advised to stay at home unless their journey was considered "absolutely necessary".

### Rain of Terror

Pregnant women were also targeted by Department of Health officials as a specially high-risk group and were advised **not** to get pregnant until the rain had run its course.

The NHS have responded quickly to the rain pandemic by setting up a special "Rainline" to advise members of the public who are worried about the rain.

The helpline received 4 million calls in the first two minutes after it was opened.

### Storm In A Teacup

Newly-appointed "rain czar" Lord Sugar announced last night that he will be sending out a 10-page leaflet to every household in the country containing guidelines on how to "stay dry" through the crisis.

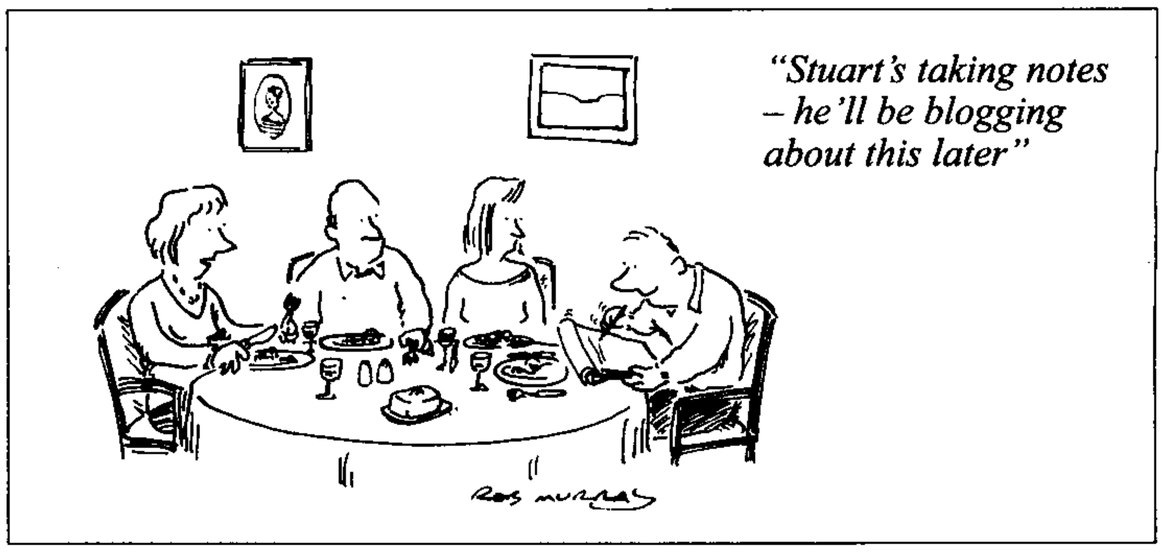
Anyone venturing outside while water is still falling out of the sky, the leaflet warns, should take the following safety measures:

- **Wear dedicated protective clothing (eg macintosh, hat, waterproof footwear)**
- **Carry rain-repelling equipment at all times. An "umbrella" (a waterproof version of the familiar parasol or sunshade) can be highly effective, but in cases of emergency it is possible to improvise remedial measures such as a folded newspaper or a Tesco shopping bag.**
- **If in a car or other vehicle, motorists should immediately activate their "windscreen wipers" as rainwater may dangerously impair the driver's vision. Those driving "convertible cars" should "raise the hood" IMMEDIATELY.**
- **Swimmers are advised to get out of the water or they will get wet**
- **The most effective remedy of all against rain is to sing, psychiatrists believe.**

Said one expert yesterday, Dr Jean Kelly from the Hydrotherapy Centre in Poole, "There is no better way to fight off the depression associated with persistent rain than to sing and dance down the street." "This," she said, "will put a smile on your face and make you happy again."

### On Other Pages

**Will Rain Cause Collapse In House Prices?**
*Full story and pics* **2-94**



# CAMERON'S FOUR LETTER T-WORD GAFFE

by Our Absolute Radio Correspondent **DJ Taylor**

**THE LEADER of the Conservative Party was left red-faced yesterday when he used an unacceptable four letter word during an interview for a popular music radio station.**

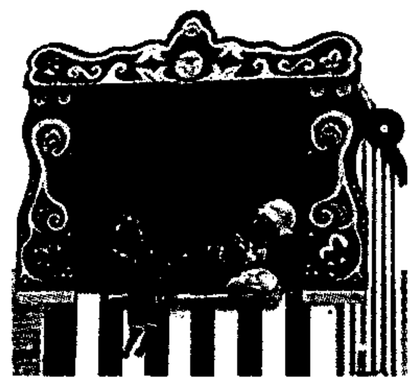
David Cameron stunned aides by letting slip the word "Tory".

Cameron immediately realised his mistake but it was too late – the damage was done. Said one observer, "He was trying to be cool and with-it, but then he went too far and blurted out a word that nobody wants to hear."

An embarrassed spokesman for Mr Cameron added, "David is very sorry if anyone was offended by the word 'Tory'. He did not realise that it has connotations that many people will find deeply offensive and is often used as a synonym for the C-word – Conservative.

"David did not mean to say that he was a Tory. He meant to say that he was a Twat."

Nursery Times
Friday, August 7, 2009



# MR PUNCH CLEARED OF ASSAULT CHARGE

by Our Crime Staff **Scott Free**

TOP celebrity children's entertainer Mr Stevie Punch today walked from court as a free man after being accused of grievous bodily harm against Judy, the policeman, the crocodile and the little dog with the sausages.

The jury heard how Mr Punch was "very famous and should be allowed to do whatever he liked". Giving evidence himself, Mr Punch told the court, "That's the way to do it!"

**Gerrard's Cross**

Yesterday his solicitor informed reporters, "Stevie will be celebrating with a big bash."

## Media Studies GCSE June 2009

**1. What is a "massive drugs seizure"?**

a) A near-lethal fit Amy Winehouse suffers as a result of an overdose?

b) The grabbing of a large quantity of cocaine from Kate Moss's handbag by Amy Winehouse?

c) An operation in which the police manage to get hold of some drugs before Amy Winehouse and Kate Moss can?

*Clue: It is not c)*

*Time in jail allowed: Two years.*

Summer Short Story Special

# The Duchy of Love

by DAME SYLVIE KRIN, Booker Prize Long Listed (1954)

*THE STORY SO FAR: Charles is determined to put a brave face on the inclement summer weather...*

"I THOUGHT we could have a picnic, darling. I think it is clearing up."

Charles stood at the leaded French window of the Mountbatten Morning Room, looking at the lowering grey sky outside.

"Don't be daft, Chazza. It's too wet even to go out for a fag." Camilla buried her head in her copy of the *Daily Mail*, freshly ironed by royal aide-de-camp Sir Alan Fitztightly.

"No, you're quite wrong, old thing," Charles persevered. "I can see a patch of blue and by luncheon it'll be bright sunshine, you'll see! I'll get Fitztightly to organise a hamper."

"God, no." Camilla sprang from her chair, throwing aside her paper. "I'll go down to Waitrose in Cirencester and get everything myself."

Charles turned and remonstrated with his beloved. "It's Fitztightly's job, darling. **You** can't be seen wandering around a supermarket with one of those trolley thingies."

"Oh yes, I can, Chazza," Camilla snorted, "and Fitztightly always gets it wrong. Remember when we had the Chief Imam to open the mini mosque in the Islamic Prayer Garden? He brought back two dozen pork pies and a bottle of Scotch."

Charles shrugged, knowing he was defeated and that Camilla would use the opportunity to sneak in a quick fag on the way from her packet of Old Trident Nuclear Strength Naval Shag (untipped).

"You go if you like, but don't forget – support the family business! Duchy Originals!"

"DUCHY Originals? Here they are, Ma'am." The nice lady with the name badge "Vedanta" pointed to a shelf of assorted, tastefully packaged items, all bearing the Royal Crest and the motto *"Organicus Bonus Est"*.

"They are very posh," Vedanta smiled, helpfully.

Camilla surveyed a veritable cornucopia of luxury food items – there were Duchy Basil and Cucumber Biscuits, Duchy Red Pepper Goat Yoghurt, Duchy Beetroot and Gooseberry Marmalade, Duchy Chocolate Nettle Drink and Duchy Cream of Rosehip and Grouse Soup.

And it wasn't only food. Look! There was a garden section. Camilla gasped at the Duchy Gardening Gloves made from sustainable bamboo fibre and imported from Tibet.

"Our hill farmers share our values," she read on the label. And, good grief, a Duchy wind-up hedge trimmer – "The Carbon-Neutral Way To Trim Your Hedge".

Camilla had to remind herself that she was here not to browse but to buy a picnic and Charles was waiting.

She picked up a packet of Duchy Walnut and Carrot Wafers.

"£27.50 for six biscuits?" she exclaimed, reading the price tag. "He must be mad."

Camilla consulted the hovering assistant Vedanta, "Is this right? £27.50?"

"'Fraid so, Ma'am. But we do our own brand for £1.99. And this week they're on special offer..."

"SPECIAL offer!" Charles exploded, as he sat expectantly, cross-legged on the McHackey tartan rug in the middle of the croquet lawn and looked at the packet of biscuits proferred by Camilla. "But these aren't Duchy... they are... er... er... What's the word I'm searching for...? **Appalling**! Yes, that's it. They're appalling! Whatever possessed you to buy them?"

Camilla pointed to the row of bulging plastic bags she had carried out to the picnic spot. "They were cheap! I got the whole caboodle for £15... scotch egg, packet of crisps and a can of coke for 99p! Unbelievable!"

Charles shuddered. "And you brought it all back in those terrible plastic carriers. What happened to the recyclable String Bag For Life that I imported from Botswana?"

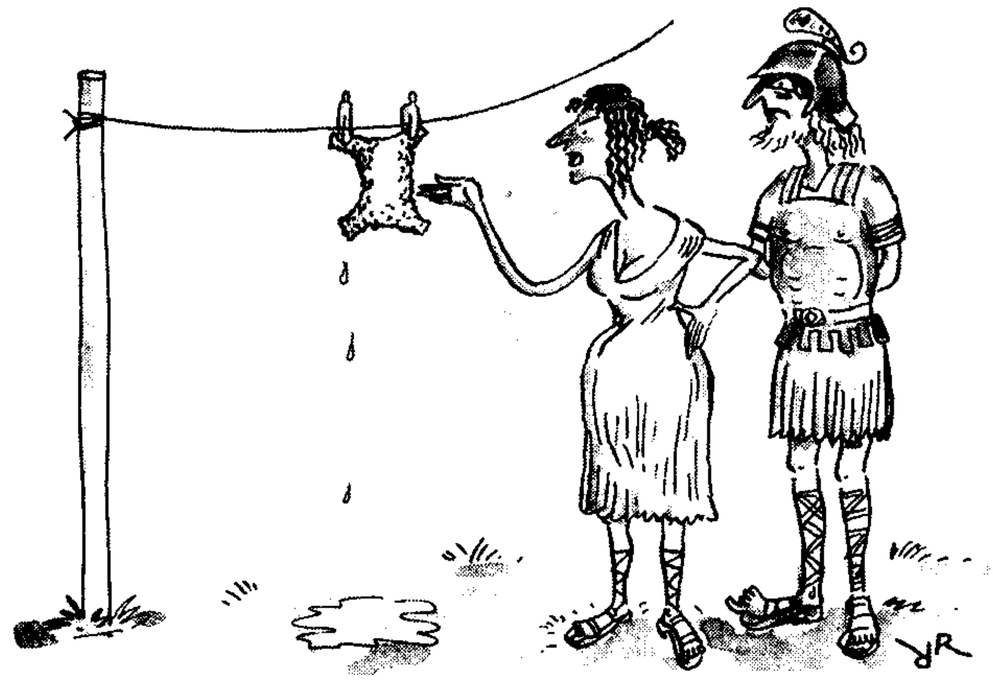
"Stop complaining, Chazza," said Camilla, as the first drops of rain began to fall. "The plastic bags will be jolly useful to put on our heads in a few minutes' time."

Charles gazed upward at the dark thunderclouds massing overhead.

Why did everything end up being sort of damp and spoilt?

*© Sylvie Krin, Ryanair Holiday Queue Collection*

*"When it comes to computers, my husband's a complete Luddite"*



*"How many times, Jason? Read the washing instructions"*

# The Alternative Rocky Horror Service Book

**No. 94 The new "Three In One" Baptism, Marriage and Funeral Service.**

**The President** *(for it is she)*: We are gathered together on this joyful but sad day to celebrate the life of this happy couple and to welcome into the church their children, to whom we offer our condolences on the sad loss of their parents. If anyone knows of any just cause or impediment why these persons should not be baptised, married and buried, they are to declare it now.

**Hymn 94**

*"Three in one and one for the price of three."*

**The President:** Who giveth this person to be buried?

**The Children of the Deceased:** We do.

**The President:** I now pronounce you baptised.

*(The congregation may here applaud)*

**The Taking of the Photos**

*(At this point anyone with a camera, or mobile phone with camera facility, may step forward to take photos of the happy corpse)*

**The President**: Do you renounce Satan and all his works?

**The Deceased:** I do.

*(The organ shall now play a piece of suitable music – it may be the Wedding March [Mendelssohn], the Funeral March [Chopin], the Christening March [Lloyd Webber] or the Trumpet Voluntary Euthanasia [attrib. Jeremiah Clarke, arr. Downes])*

**The Sermon**

**The President**: Thank you all for coming and the family hope you will join them afterwards for Fairtrade coffee and biscuits.

**The Dismissal**

**The President**: You may now christen the bride.

**All**: Whatever.

**Offertory Hymn**

*"I'm getting buried in the morning"*

*(The collection shall be taken for Dignitas/ Relate/Save The Children)*

## BBC Radio 3

### Opera Highlights

### Berlusconi's I Prostituti-Frutti

#### Act One

THE curtain rises on the Robber Baron's lavishly furnished boudoir. Above the bed is a large gilt mirror. Photographs of the Robber Baron, accompanied by world leaders, decorate the walls.

Silvio is amorously engaged with the celebrated courtesan Rumpina Pumpina. She sings to him the moving aria *Mille e Tre (I'm yours for 1,003 euros, plus VAT)*.

The Baron touchingly responds *It's a Deal*.

Rumpina urges Silvio to speak up and address his love-talk to her handbag, which she has strategically placed under the pillow.

Act One closes as Rumpina disrobes, while Silvio admires himself in the mirror and sings *Non Sono Santo ("I'm not a saint")*.

#### Act Two

IT IS the morning of the next day. A jubilant Rumpina, clutching her handbag, visits the offices of the newspaper *Il Nusi di Scruzi*. We see her handing a small tape recorder to the editor, while she sings the traditional Venetian folk song *Just one million euro, give it to me, delicious money from Italy*.

The editor, Signor Filthio, is only too happy to oblige and hands Rumpina a bag of gold ducats. He sings triumphantly *Bastardo Finito (We've got the bastard at last)*.

#### Act Three

A SQUARE in Rome, the Piazza Margarita. The citizens are besieging the news kiosk for copies of *Il Nusi di Scruzi*.

From an upper window, the Baron looks down with trepidation, afraid that his reputation will soon be in tatters. He curses the treacherous Rumpina, singing *La slagga e Mobile (The crafty bitch recorded me on her mobile)*.

But his anxiety turns to joy when he sees the male citizens saluting him with many a crude gesture, as they sing the rousing final chorus *Que Macho Stallione*, praising the 72-year-old Baron's virility and prowess.

Silvio descends to the street where he is carried shoulder high to a nearby bordello, where he is greeted as an old friend by a chorus of courtesans who sing *Cosi Fan Prostituti (We love you, Silvio, just like the men do!)*.

#### Act Four

Silvio elected for a fourth term.

*(That's enough opera. Ed.)*

Catering at the very highest level, serving the likes of the Suntan of Brunei and The Queen, Warren Hoile decided to apply his expertise into the opening of his own catering company based in Gloucestershire.

*Cheltenham Food & Drink Guide*

## Dave Snooty AND HIS PALS

OO-ER - THEY'RE GOING TO MAKE A FILM ABOUT OUR TIME IN THE BULLINGDON CLUB !
DOUBLE CRIPES ! ! !
20 YEARS EARLIER . . .
LET'S DE-BAG OIKY OSBORNE !
HOG-WHIMPERINGLY DRUNK
STOP COMPLAINING CHUMMY - HERE'S SOME MONEY !
IT'LL SHOW US IN A TERRIBLE LIGHT ! HOW CAN WE STOP THEM ?
I KNOW - LET'S DE-BAG THEM, THROW A POT-PLANT THROUGH THEIR WINDOW AND PAY THEM OFF WITH SOME MONEY !
HOG-WHIMPERINGLY SOBER
HOORAH FOR THE BULLERS !
BULLY FOR US ! ! !

# POETRY CORNER

## In Memoriam John Ryan, Creator of Captain Horatio Pugwash

So. Farewell
Then John Ryan,
Creator of the
Legendary comic
Book character
Captain Pugwash.

Yes, you were
An incompetent
Pirate.

"Nautical nitwits",
"Blistering barnacles",
"Dithering dogfish",
"Kipper me capstans" –

These were a few
Of your
Catchphrases.

All together now –
Tiddly-pom, tiddly-pom,
Dum-di-dum-di-dum-di-
Dum etc.

E.J. Thribbwash (17½)

# THEN AND NOW

# IN THE COURTS

## Filth v. Whistle-Bower Day 94

**Mr Justice Eadycarrot** *(for it is always he)*: Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, we have had an interesting few days, have we not, and you have heard a great deal of evidence concerning Mr Filth, one of our most respected newspaper proprietors.

Mr Filth is, in his own words, "a rough diamond", "a bit of a geezer" and "a very generous philanthropist donating large sums of money to various charities".

Other witnesses have attempted to introduce evidence to suggest a rather different story. They sought to link Mr Filth with the publication of what are often described as "adult" magazines and over-18 satellite channels, in the hope of lowering Mr Filth in your estimation.

That is why I have had to disallow any such evidence redounding to Mr Filth's discredit I quote the precedent of Maxwell v Truth, 1987. Notwithstanding the above, should I have inadvertently permitted any mention in this case of phrases such as "Asian Babes", "Big and Bouncy", "Teenage Nymphs at the Dentist", or whatever it may be, I must ask you to put it from your mind, however alluring such thoughts may be, particularly to male members of the jury.

No, ladies and gentlemen, you are only to consider the gravamen, the narrow question of whether or not Mr Filth intervened in the editorial direction of his newspapers. Again, you have heard clear evidence that he did. But you are equally to put this from your mind, whatever the learned imbeciles in the Appeal Court may, or may not have said, when they attempted to intervene in the direction of this court by pointing out that I had totally cocked it up.

As I say, I wish you to put all of this from your mind when you come to award Mr Filth huge damages in compensation for the impertinence of Mr Tom Whistle-Bower in his grubby and salacious attempts to imply that Mr Filth is anything other than a saintly figure who is one of the greatest newspaper proprietors of this or, you may think, any other age. It is entirely a matter for you.

I would therefore ask you, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, to retire, as I myself will probably have to do, if those idiots in the Appeal Court get their way.

*(The jury retired to find Mr Filth guilty as charged of being a seedy pornographer* [Shurely shome mishtake? Ed.]*)*

Advertisement

RYANAIR

FOR THE HOLIDAY OF A LIFETIME!

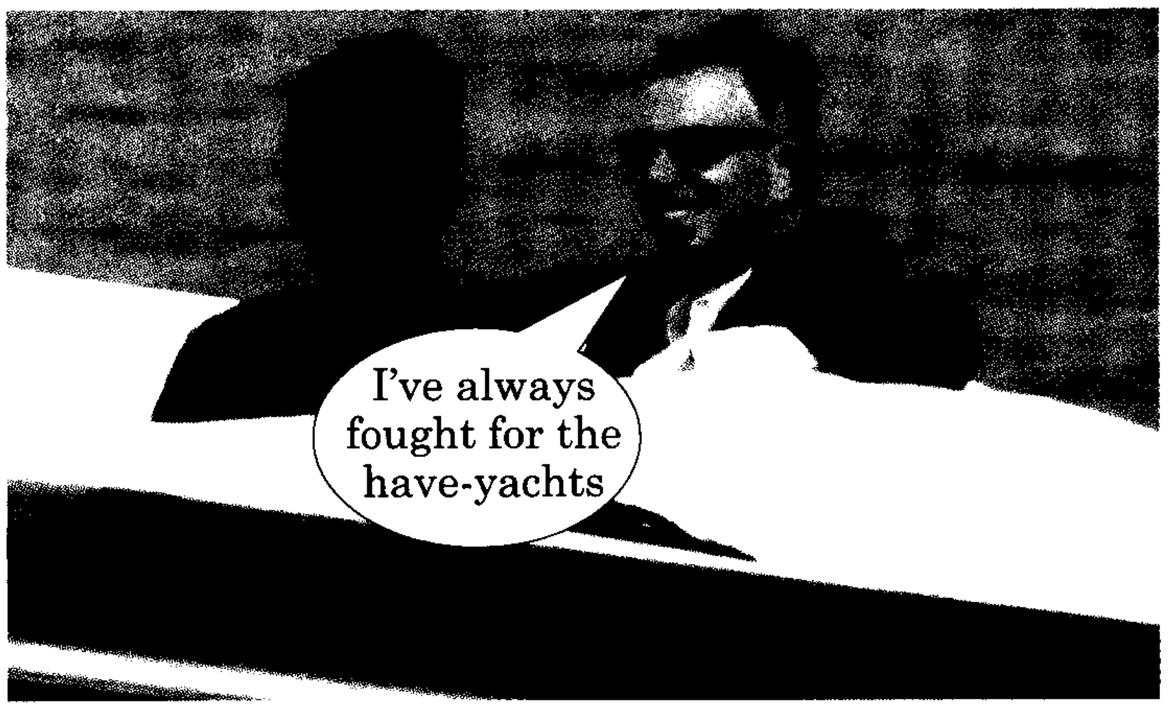
First there was No Frills! Now there is No Flight!

Save pounds when you book a Ryanair holiday. You pay for the flight, but nothing else – because you don't get on it! Beat that for a bargain!!!

Here are some of the destinations you won't be going to:

LIMOGES HELSINKI TIRANA LUND

RYANAIR Not Getting You There For Less!




# LEMBIT SHOCK

## News In Brief

# UNIVERSITY FEE ROW

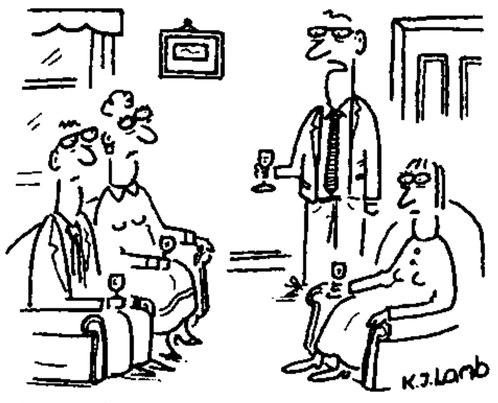
**THE BUSINESS Secretary Lord Mandelson last night promised that higher university tuition fees would directly help poorer children not to go to university.**

"You only have to look at the tens of thousands of unemployed graduates to realise how important it is we stop poorer children ruining their chances of getting a job by going to university," said Lord *(cont. p. 94)*

# ORGANIC FOOD PROBE

**A NEW report by the Food Standards Agency into organic food has found that organic food does have considerable effects on a person's wealth.**

"Our study suggests a direct link behind the length of time someone spends shopping in an organic supermarket to how little money they have left when they leave the shop," said a professor *(cont. p. 94)*



*"By the way, our conversation this evening may be monitored for quality and training purposes"*

## POLLY FILLER

AS IF the school "Hell-idays" weren't bad enough, now along comes Swine Flu to make the summer a total wash out – and I don't just mean two weeks of sodden "Staycation" in cloudbursting Cornwall with toddler Charlie complaining about getting rain in his pasty every day!!

No, when I woke up on Monday I felt sick and I had a massive headache – that's right, the au pair was ill! The selfish girl claimed she had Swine Flu, or Whine Flu, as I call it!

But I could tell our hopeless Chinese girl was faking it – she had none of the symptoms, except sneezing, a runny nose, a hacking cough, a slight temperature (104°F), aching limbs, and diarrhoea and vomiting!?!

Aachu was obviously well enough to read up a few of the symptoms on the internet, but I wasn't fooled.

The government guide doesn't list inability to iron Simon's underpants or clean out the toddler's hamster cage as one of the main indicators of the virus, does it?

So before you could say Tamiflu, I had her out of bed taking Charlie to see Ice Age Three for the seventh time!!

Meanwhile, the Useless Simon also claims to have Swine Flu, lying around all day watching repeats of Stephen Fry's Extreme Weight Loss on UK Dave Minus Six (with special guest stars Dara O Briain and David Mitchell). But in the Useless Simon's case it's hard to tell if he's ill or not, since that's all he does all day anyway!! And how can Simon pick up a virus when he can't even pick up his socks from the bathroom floor? Like all other useless men! Aren't they useless?!! But let's forget them – it's not hard, is it?!! Where was I?

So, if you've got an outbreak of so-called Swine Flu in your au pair, here's Polly's guide to what you should do:

❶ **Quarantine**. Take yourself away from her immediately and book into a luxury spa for the weekend.

❷ **Face Mask**. They do a fabulous mud face mask at Pampers in Berkshire (only £795 per night, mud not included).

❸ **Wash Your Hands**. Yes, if she does persist in pretending to be ill, you should wash your hands of her completely and send her on the first plane back to her village in China! After Bird Flu they should be used to the odd pandemic!!

So, I think we've all learned one thing this week. Swine Flu is no joke. Though it is a column!!

© *P. Filler 2009.*

## Let's Parlez Franglais!

### Numero 94 Un Docteur Français Ecrit

Comme un medecin, je suis often asked, "Docteur, ma femme est tres jolie et tres younger than moi. Elle insiste que je go jogging dans le heat et elle me donne nothing a manger. Regardez, je suis totallement done for! Pardonnez moi, je suis coming over all faint."

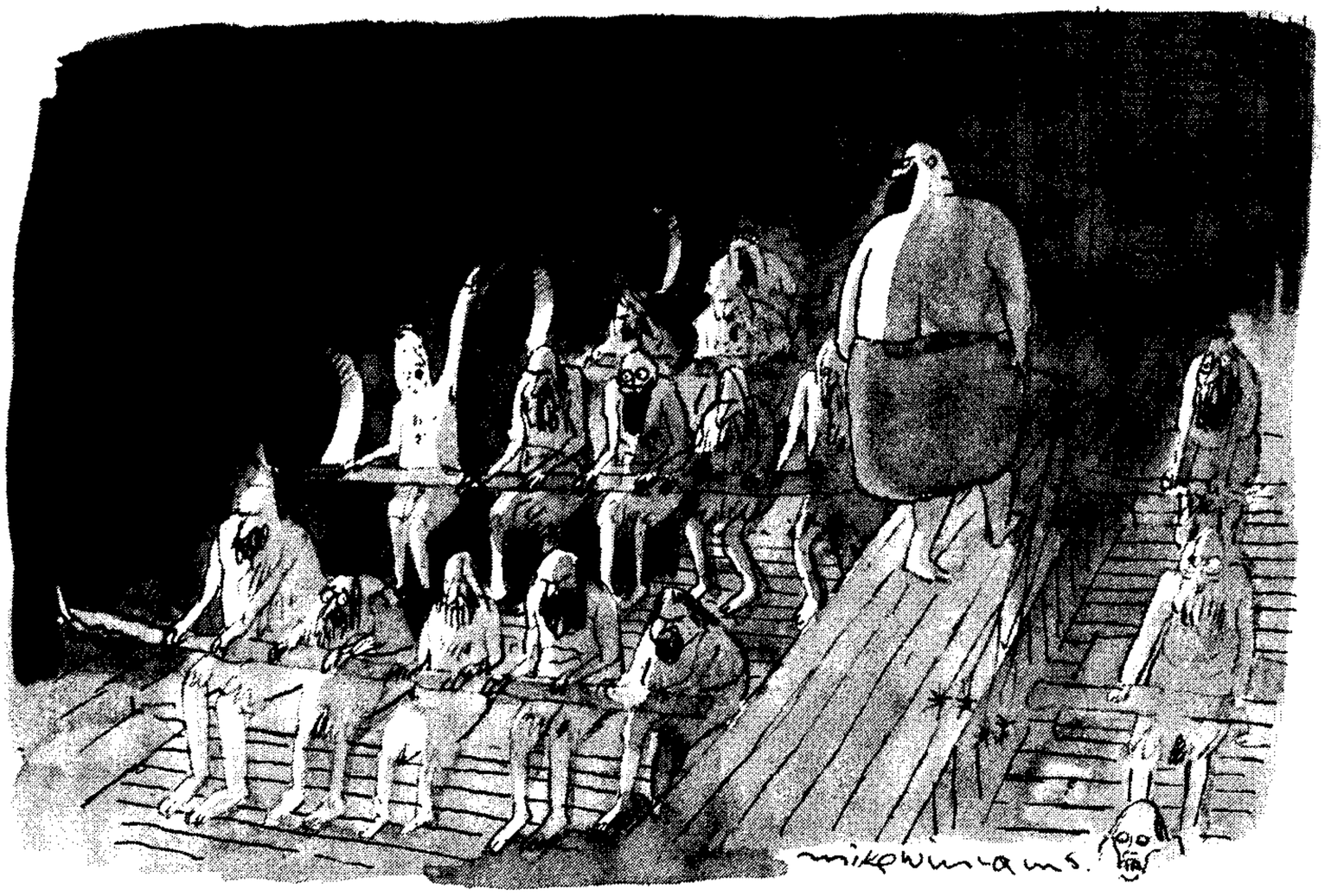
Last week, j'ai realised que mon patient etait le President de France est il etait lying unconscious sur le floor.

"Mon Dieu!" j'ai dit. "Je diagnose qu'il sufferit from 'fruity younger wife' syndrome (*Carlabrunius anorexercisiensis abnormalis*, to donner le full nom medicale)."

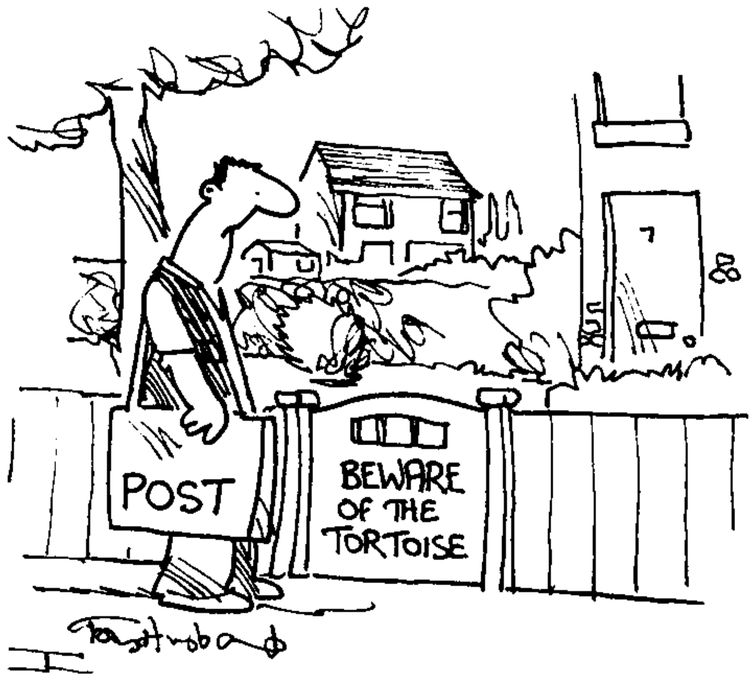
Qui arrive normally is que le patient devient plus en plus skinny et puis, phut, il est mort! Quelle tragedy!! Et je have to tell la widow (qui looks tres sexy dressed en noire) que "c'est la vie".

Si vous etes worried that votre jeune femme wants to tuer vous, vous derez consulter un professional avocat de divorce immediatement.

© Le Late Kilometres Kington.



*"Sir! Sir! I feel I might be developing a case of repetitive strain injury"*




## From The Message Boards

**Members of the online community respond to the major issues of the day...**

### Met chiefs back down over badge ban

The Metropolitan Police officers did no more than defy their superiors by wearing union flag badges saying, "Support the British Troops". Inasmuch and insofar as they did so do, then they did no more than follow Jesus, who did no more than render unto Caesar the things which were Caesar's and to God the things that were God's. – ***Mr_Salmon***

lets hope the iraq police follow suet an show there gratetude to our troop's for train-ing and protect-ing them – ***Eye_4_an_eye***

I couldn't help noticing that neither of the gay policemen with the surrogate baby seemed to have a badge. Now that the ban has been lifted, it will be interesting to see if they (and their "son") start wearing them. – ***Metric_Martyr***

Avon & Somerset police have issued female officers with headscarves to wear in mosques. Surely no decent muslim could object if they were to add a patriotic badge? – ***Robert_"R"***

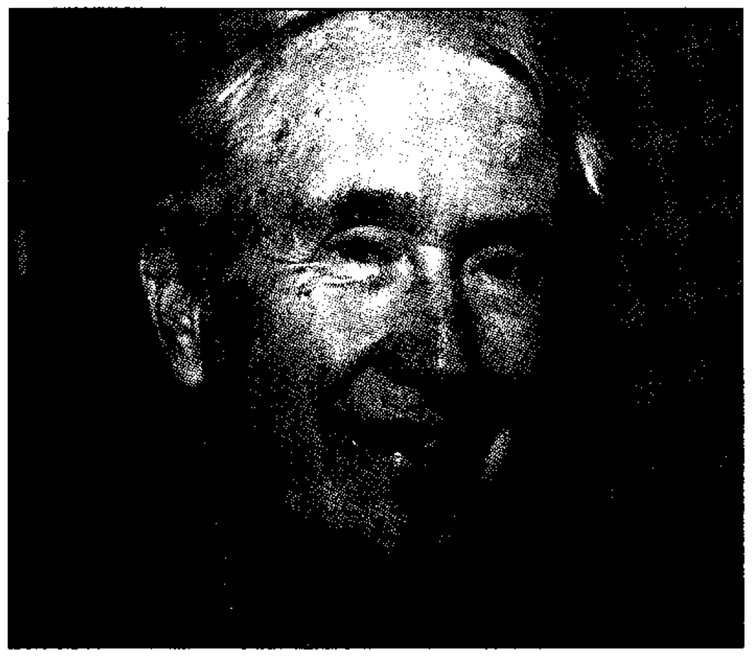
if asien oficer's ware taliban's on there head's then is only fare that brit-ish oficer's ware the onion flag? – ***Hayley_321***

Here in Cyprus I fly the union flag above my house at all times. I do this to express pride in my country, but if it causes offence then that's a bonus. – ***Pat_the_ex-pat***

Now that the Zanu Labour police bosses have generously granted permission to wear these badges, the bobbies should show their contempt by refusing to do so. – ***Brown_out***

The media claim that the ban was imposed because one solitary person found the badges offensive. Not so. I know for a fact that at least two people complained, because I was one of them. I am deeply offended by the union flag, that shameful symbol of the pernicious British experiment. Being an Englishman with a thousand years of Angelfolc blood coursing through my veins, my words fell on deaf ears. – ***Athelstan***

# DIARY



## FRANK McCOURT: FROM THE OTHER SIDE

So now I've passed away and gone to heaven and the whole world seems like it's a-grievin' and the rain is pourin' wet over the cobbled streets of Limerick as though the earth itself were in mournin' and inside the little cardboard homes made of discarded Corn O'Flakes packets that Da always said must suffice for dwellings young and old alike are on their knees in supplication to the good Lord askin' that He might have pity on my sad and miserable soul.

And Mam is dead and Dad is dead and me Granmammy is dead and me Granpappy is dead and their Mams and Dads are dead too and their Mams and Dads before them are dead and that makes for an awful number of dead says Father McGinty in his wisdom but 'tis a glorious thing to die for the Faith and for Ireland and for the Good Lord above not forgettin' his own dear dead Mam, the Blessed Virgin dressed so beautiful all in blue and lookin' lovely as a shiny new farthing.

So St Peter greets me at the Pearly Gates with his long flowin' beardy beard a-flowin' and I can tell he's had one or two because he's swayin' and laughin' and recitin' bawdy rhymes beneath his breath. "How can I help ye?" he asks by way of greeting and I tell him I'm Frank McCourt and I'm sorry to say I've just passed away and now isn't that a terrible shame, all things considered. And Mam is dead I tell him and Dad is dead and me Granmammy is dead and me Granpappy is dead and –

– I'll have to stop you there if I may, Frank, says St Peter, as I'm a little pressed for time, though to hear the full details at a later date would be a rare treat indeed.

Not to worry, I tell St Peter, you can read all about them in me best-sellin' book *Angela's Ashes* and ain't that a blessing, I say.

To be sure, Frank, says St Peter, that's one thing I cannot do up here in Paradise, as we don't have your book in stock.

You don't have me best-sellin' book in stock? I say.

'Tis the case, explains St Peter. There's no misery memoirs here in Paradise, not depressing childhoods or guilt-wracked teens, none at all. Why else would we call it Paradise, would you answer me that?

So here I am up in heaven and the choirs are all singin' and the angels are flappin' their wings and the sun is a-glintin' through the fluffy white clouds and everybody is happy and sayin' my, but isn't this the most glorious place but to be sure I've not felt so very miserable in all my born days. I've not felt this bad since Mam cut the tail off me pet mouse and fried it in batter and me younger brother Malachy got the chunky bit with all the flesh on it and I was left with the thin bit at the end and I said now where's the nutrition in that and my tears flowed and flowed and meanwhile me pet mouse was hollerin' and stampin' because he wanted a bite of his own tail and Mam hadn't furnished him with a portion and my tears flowed and flowed and flowed and I believed they would never stop flowin' and at the memory of those tears flowin', my tears begin to flow.

Cheer up Frank, says the Archangel Gabriel, It might never happen.

But it just has, says I, did no-one tell you I've died. And now I've gone to heaven and everybody told me it would be just grand up here and it's not it's as mighty a disappointment as ever there was. And with that the tears start flowin' down my cheeks like the Niagara and I'm weepin' and weepin' and weepin' and I'm weepin' so hard that St Peter himself comes over and offers me his linen hankie.

This is Heaven, says he. You've got everythin' you could possibly be wantin' – beautiful white suits, lush music, stupendous clouds, gorgeous angels, great craic and God Himself in attendance and there's a name to drop. So tell me this, Frank – what more could a fella need after he's died? What's the problem?

So I wipe away the tears, and I wipe away the tears that follow the tears, and the tears that follow the tears that follow the tears, and finally I look St Peter in the eyes and I tell him fair and square where those problems lie, just like Dad would have lain, all flat on the floor, if only he'd been able to afford a floor.

In Paradise, I tell him, there's misery for the finding, if only you'll turn your Irish eyes towards it and catch a peak. Just take a look at that harp, I say.

Sure, 'tis a splendid harp, says he, what can possibly be wrong with that harp?

But, I say, those skinny little strings all in a row remind me of the frets and the furrows on me dear Granmammy's brow, frets and furrows as deeply dug as the deepest dug ditch owing to her life being one of abject poverty and misery and degradation and abuse at the hands of men for whom alcohol was the very devil. And take a look at that angelic choir! I continue.

Sure, says he, 'tis a splendid angelic choir: what is there to fault about that angelic choir?

'Tis their wings, I explain: their poor darling wings remind me of that sad little bird, a little red robin, that died in me mam's own fair but wizened arms on the very first day of May one dark December morn deep in the howling cold of March. The poor little thing it didn't stand a chance no it didn't after me Granpappy hit it over the head with his shovel because he swore it was starin' at him and twitterin' too much. With terrible twisted tormented tangled torturent turbulent memories like that, it breaks my heart to set my eyes on that angelic choir.

And will ye not take a look at God Almighty, sitting up there on his throne? says I.

Sure, says he, is He not magnificent, shrouded there in all his Glory?

To me, He looks a sad and sorry careworn fellow, says I, and which of us could ever blame Him for being so deeply depressed, for I would be miserable too had I no mammy and no pappy to tuck me up warm in my bed each night but instead was obliged to sit alone and suicidal on my throne presiding over a Paradise that is nothing like I planned it to be. And beside Him is His only son The Lord Jasus, looking just as mournful and gloomy and Jasus is lookin' around thinkin' to hisself, well, if this is Paradise, it's not what it's cracked up to be, and frankly the worst day of my life was that day I rose again from the dead.

*As told to*
CRAIG BROWN

I'LL GET THE DRINKS, DAD. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE?
VODKA CRANBERRY PLEASE PIXIE FROU FROU.
SAME FOR ME.
YEAH?
TWO VODKA CRANBERRIES AND A MARTINI PLEASE. LEMON NO OLIVE..
YOU GOT ANY I.D., LOVE?
I.D.?
18+ OVER ONLY PERSONS MAY BE ASKED FOR AN I.D.
DON'T YOU KNOW WHO I AM?!!
THAT'S MY GIRL!

# Literary Review

## *Very thin, Lizzie*

**The Exmoor Files**
Liz Jones
*(Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £12.99)*

WHEN exactly did Liz Jones come into our lives, and why? But never mind, she's there now, "the queen of confessional journalism" as one newspaper called her last weekend, carelessly forgetting to include the word "drama".

With a shamelessness that verges on the pathological, she has mined the most private crevices of her clearly miserable life in a series of self-eviscerating columns that act as catnip to the net-curtain-twitching readers of several right-wing mid-market newspapers. Or at least, so the editors of those papers would have us believe.

Certainly, Jones made journalistic history of a sort when writing a column in one newspaper about her disastrous marriage to a younger man, who was then commissioned to write a column in another newspaper about his disastrous marriage to her. To read these columns was to lose valuable minutes of your life. Who gives a monkey's about these awful people? And they wonder why newspapers are in such precipitous decline.

One problem with confessional hackery, though, is that you quickly run out of material. There is only so much you can confess to, even if you're Fred West. There are two solutions to this: get a proper job, or start recycling. Jones's green credentials are displayed to full effect in *The Exmoor Files*, which is subtitled "How I Lost a Husband and Found Rural Bliss". Yes, Liz Jones has moved to the country. No one else has ever done this. Crucially, no other columnist running out of ideas has ever done this, for well over a fortnight.

Being Liz Jones, though, she hasn't thought it through. "I had sold my house, my beautiful Georgian house, the perfect, pristine house I had wanted almost my whole life, with its wide, honeyed floorboards, grand fireplaces, basement kitchen with stainless-steel central island unit..." and on and on she goes, like a coked-up estate agent. (She had sold it to an "unmarried chef", because she couldn't bear the idea of children "ruining the pristine beeswaxiness of my floors".)

Instead she buys Cold Comfort Farm. The Aga doesn't work, they've taken away all the light fittings, and upstairs is full of the most ghastly 1973 Laura Ashley wallpaper. Why has she done it?

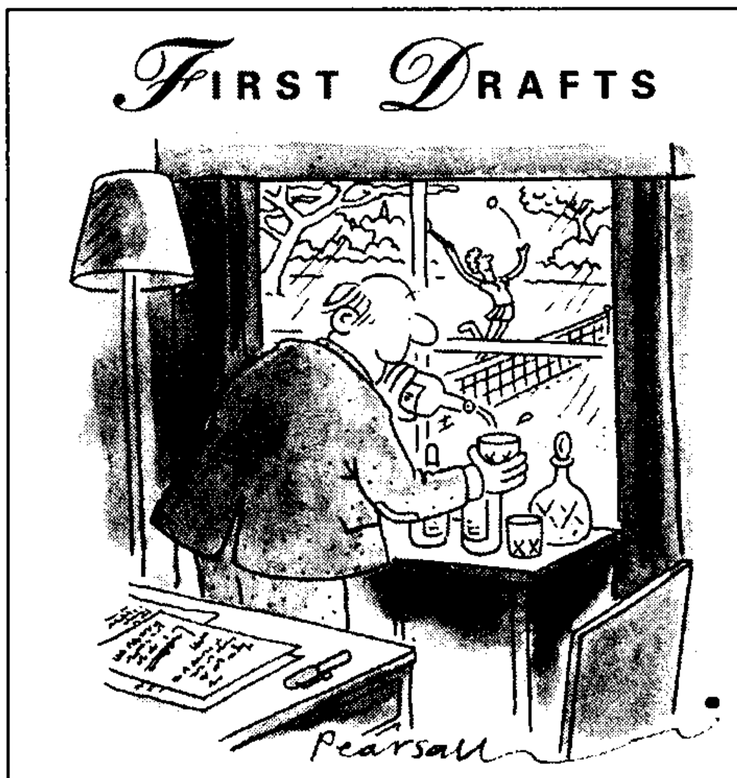
It's all her ex-husband's fault, of course. On page 9 she says she's "trying very, very hard to put what he did behind me". Thirty pages later she's still trying. He was fat and lazy, wore bad clothes and had affairs with women called Daphne. "I threw all his supermarket own-brand possessions into the street after him."

But he came round a few weeks later and they had sex "on the brown leather sofa from SCP on Curtain Road".

Now she needs to make a change. She wants to show him and herself that she's "not shallow and materialistic" while repeatedly showing us that she is precisely these things. She goes out and buys a horse. Does she give it a carrot? Or does she give it "organic M&S carrot batons"?

The countryside, needless to say, comes as a terrible shock to her. "I should have known [it] would be like this: wet, windy and inconvenient." Everything old and clapped-out and falling to pieces reminds her of herself. The locals are all freaks: "If someone has teeth, that's a bonus." All the men are bastards, but then all men are. "Oh, how I miss my limestone power shower with filtered water, dinner-plate head and side jet washes!"

Oddly enough, she writes quite well about her horses and cats and the sheepdog she rescues, as her farm turns into an ad hoc animal sanctuary. She loves the animals: it's just humans she has trouble with. Nicola the holistic horsewoman gives her a hug. "It's nice to be touched by another human being again. Usually the only people who touch me are ones I pay handsomely." Ugh, you think, as on almost every page of this strange, toe-curling, utterly pointless book.




**John Betjeman 'Summoned By Bells'**

## *Books & Bookmen*

■ DOES Salman Rushdie wander round Hampstead Heath propositioning teenage girls? Yes, according to *Sunday Times* hack Ruby Warrington. "When I was 18, Salman Rushdie chatted me up," she wrote on 12 July, introducing a feature on Rushdie's ex-wife Padma Lakshmi.

"I was enjoying a lunch-break latte on a bench in Hampstead, when up sidled a portly, balding, bespectacled man at least a quarter of a century my senior (he was 47 at the time). 'You look absolutely charming sitting there. I wonder, would you go for dinner with me?' he spluttered." According to Ruby she ran off, horrified.

Rushdie was 47 in 1994. As he pointed out in a letter to the paper, he has police witnesses to everything he did at that time, since he was receiving round-the-clock protection from Special Branch guards at a secret address – and not prowling around Hampstead on his own "chatting up unpleasant young women...If she was accosted by someone claiming to be me, she was obviously too dim to understand that the man was a phoney".

The *Sunday Times* agreed to run a version of the letter last weekend – but only after severe editing had removed all his disparaging remarks about Warrington, and his comment that her story was "entirely untrue". The *Sunday Times* is happy to cast aspersions on novelists, it seems, but to call its hacks unpleasant, dim or inaccurate is clearly intolerable.

■ WANT to know the secrets of success? Look no further than the new paperback *Against the Grain: Lessons in Entrepreneurship from the Founder of Cobra Beer* by Karan Bilimoria, aka Lord Bilimoria of Chelsea, one of Labour's favourite business gurus.

Who better to teach those entrepreneurial lessons than the man who introduced Cobra beer to Britain, chancellor of Thames Valley University, deputy president of the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry?

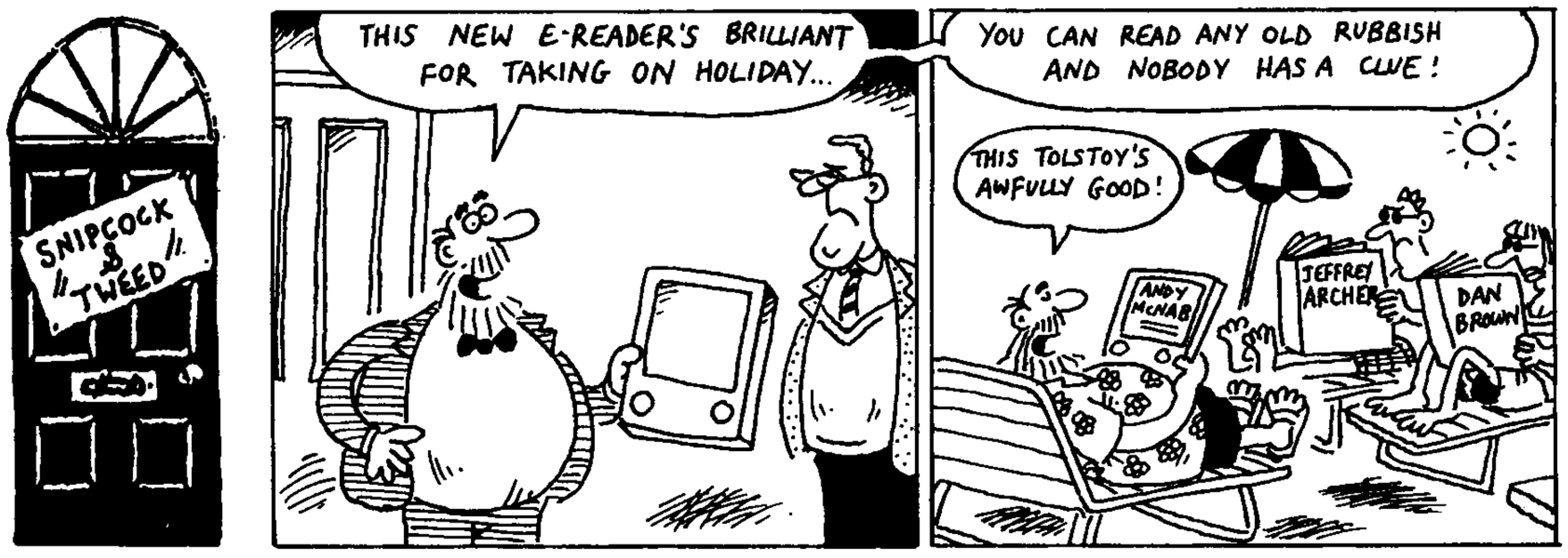
"Starting out with a heap of student debt, a complete lack of industry experience and parents desperate for their son to get a proper job, it could all have gone wrong," says the blurb. "But Karan's single-minded determination to succeed, and his ability to inspire those around him to buy into his vision, turned Cobra, sip-by-sip, into the multi-million pound business it is today."

Alas! Despite the book's hype, Cobra seldom turned a profit over the past two decades. Sales increased each year, but so did the company's liabilities as it used incoming finance to settle past debts. After losing £16m last year, it finally went bust earlier this year owing more than £70m to unsecured creditors. Happily, however, Bilimoria was able to leap back on board, buying the failed company (minus its debts) from administrators in a controversial "pre-pack" arrangement. A lesson in entrepreneurship indeed!

■ MANY Booker prize panels have had a tacit policy of chucking out anything that can't be read in a day at the earliest opportunity. Not James Naughtie's.

The celebratedly long-winded *Today* presenter has overseen the selection of a long-winded longlist, 13 books adding up to 4,800 pages, which excited broadsheet newspapers but apparently not booksellers (with vampire tales, Michael Jackson necrophilia and three-for-two deals to flog, few shops have the time).

His team's tolerance thus far of wordy authors augurs well for the heftiest books selected, 500-page-plus efforts by AS Byatt, Hilary Mantel and Sarah Waters. In other years they would have fallen foul of the Booker rule that judges (who are in theory reading the finalists for the third time) never plump for a shortlist's plumpest titles – hence


SNIPCOCK & TWEED
THIS NEW E-READER'S BRILLIANT FOR TAKING ON HOLIDAY...
YOU CAN READ ANY OLD RUBBISH AND NOBODY HAS A CLUE!
THIS TOLSTOY'S AWFULLY GOOD!
ANDY McNAB
JEFFREY ARCHER
DAN BROWN

the recent run of skinny winners.

In other respects the host of Radio 4's *Bookclub* may not be such a happy choice, as anyone who witnessed the climax of his previous stint as a book prize chairman can testify. Recalling his, er, exhaustive speech as the first Samuel Johnson Prize chairman 10 years ago, organisers of the prize banquet will have to adjust their normal calculations of when guests can leave. There will also be worries as to whether Naughtie can forsake his usual ums, asides and subclauses to simply deliver the words "The winner is..." in the humiliatingly brief live slot that BBC1's 10pm News allocates to the chairman's announcement.

■ LAST week's books pages offered some particularly brazen examples of puffery, perhaps on the assumption that most bookish types are already abroad (engaged in their largely mythical "summer reading") and so such biased reviews stand a good chance of escaping scrutiny.

In the *Guardian*, not one but two Penguin books on food and consumerism were warmly welcomed by Felicity Lawrence, author of... a Penguin book on food and consumerism. And in the London *Evening Standard*, Michael Burleigh enabled Andrew Roberts to add to his heap of chummy reviews by fellow right-wing historians, pronouncing Roberts's Second World War chronicle "compelling" in the first paragraph, and happily still finding it "compelling" in his last paragraph too.

You'd think Burleigh would manage to be a little more attentive to his adjectives, as Roberts declared (in the *Sunday Telegraph*) that Burleigh's *Earthly Powers* was a "hugely ambitious" project that "succeeds magnificently" – and for good measure said it was "passionate", "refreshingly conservative" and "fascinating, important and thought-provoking".

*'Bookworm'*

## *LIBRARY NEWS*

■ NATIONAL Archives chief exec Natalie Ceeney is overseeing cuts including 35 specialist jobs and Monday closures at the Kew reading rooms (see last *Eye*), but so far she isn't sharing the pain herself.

According to the newly released 2008-9 accounts, she took a 16 percent pay rise last year, upping her salary by £20,000.

Meanwhile, Kersten England, the community services boss spearheading the loopy plans to bulldoze Halifax's Calderdale Central Library (*Eyes passim*), is off to pastures new (well, York). Colleagues working for the library service weren't too thrilled to be asked to contribute to a leaving present – especially as they've been waiting since April for their back pay to be sorted out.

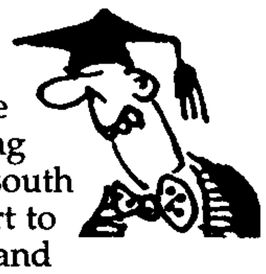
England's PA emailed everyone in the department, letting them know that a card would also be sent around to be signed. There could be some choice messages in that card.

And over in Cumbria, libraries are being renamed LOCAL*links* [sic]. This follows the merger of some libraries with tourist information or advice centres to make what the county council calls "multi-service customer centres".

## *REMAINDERS OF THE DAY*

**Spotted in Poundland in Brighton:** *Cameron on Cameron: Conversations with Dylan Jones*. Price £1. (Published by Fourth Estate, 2008, £12.99)

## *EDUCASHUN NEWZ*



■ PARENTS are spending the summer occupying the rooftops of south London in an effort to save a beautiful and thriving school from demolition.

Lewisham council wants to pull down Lewisham Bridge Primary School to squeeze a much larger "foundation" school on the site, to be sponsored by the "Leathersellers Company" – one of the City's livery companies. Some 800 pupils, aged 3 to 16, would have to share a tiny playground, breaking government guidelines on outdoor education and play space.

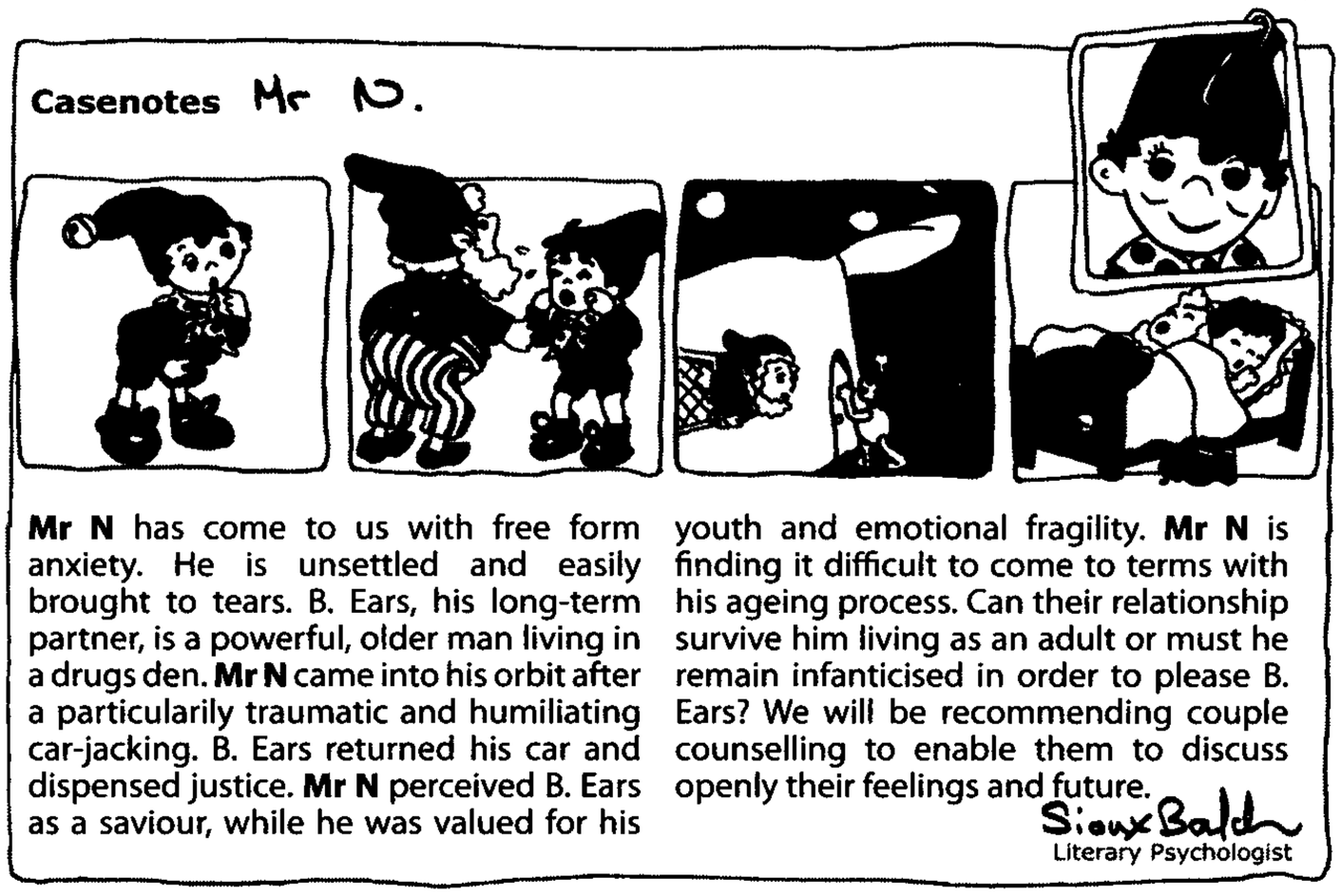
The council's plans may yet be scuppered by English Heritage, which has slapped a grade II listing on the Elmira Street building, which has also won support from the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment and the Victorian Society. But in the meantime a group of parents are occupying the school roof.

It's all a far cry from Alnwick in Northumberland, where pupils at the Duchess's Community High School are desperate for a new school.

They are learning in mobile classrooms and cupboards, in between getting regularly soaked through while walking between two school sites separated by several roads. The school has 1,131 pupils crammed into space for just 900, and it cannot even hold a sixth-form assembly without breaking its fire certificate due to overcrowding.

Despite this, the school manages to get good academic results – which put it out of reach of all the various schemes for new bricks and mortar.

On the last day before parliament closed for summer, local MP Sir Alan Beith made an urgent plea asking what could be done to build a new school, saying that "a school in as poor a physical condition as the Duchess's High School cannot be expected to continue in that way".




**Mr N** has come to us with free form anxiety. He is unsettled and easily brought to tears. B. Ears, his long-term partner, is a powerful, older man living in a drugs den. **Mr N** came into his orbit after a particularily traumatic and humiliating car-jacking. B. Ears returned his car and dispensed justice. **Mr N** perceived B. Ears as a saviour, while he was valued for his youth and emotional fragility. **Mr N** is finding it difficult to come to terms with his ageing process. Can their relationship survive him living as an adult or must he remain infanticised in order to please B. Ears? We will be recommending couple counselling to enable them to discuss openly their feelings and future.

Siouxsie Baldwin
Literary Psychologist

This morning, as he puts salt in his porridge and wonders whether to have his eggs poached or scrambled, Ricky Ponting may know how St Sebastian felt. The Australian captain has plucked so many arrows from his flesh during this Test that even Emperor Diocletian, scourge of the Christian martyr, might have bade the archers cease.

**MICHAEL HENDERSON,** *Daily Telegraph*

**What is the most extravagant thing you have ever bought?**

To me extravagance means exceeding the limits of reason or necessity. If I got home and all my material possessions had disappeared, I like to think I would be over it in a heartbeat. One thing that

## Pseuds Corner

**was a real treat, however, is a Limoges enamel box that used to belong to Yves St Laurent – French kings used to give them to their ambassadors. My art dealer managed to get it for £43,000 at auction in Paris, a reasonable price, considering how rare it is.**

**JAMES PALUMBO,** *Sunday Times*

**Was becoming a musician inevitable?**

It was really a matter of just being stoned one day, screaming some T-Rex or blues, and looking at my reflection in this work of art my parents have of a psychedelic dildo city, and I was like: 'Django, you obviously love singing, you love dancing, what are you doing?'

**DJANGO JAMES, son of Eurythmic Dave Stewart and Bananarama's Siobhan Fahey,** *The London Paper*

I'm not really a politician – I'm a social engineer.

**LEMBIT OPIK,** *Observer*

*Brief Encounter explores the intensification and acceleration of social exchanges and activities across world-time and space-time. Drawings and video work confront this situation by offering a crucible where heterogeneous forms of sociability are worked out through a dynamic network of forms – before, during and after production.*

**Advertisement for a Facebook forum**

The illusionary effects of the kaleidoscope lens offer a cyclical metamorphosis of the male genitalia that ambiguously refuse any systematic categorisation or coherent recognition. Brief moments of visual hostility quickly give lead to the curiosity and perversity of voyeurism, immediately replaced by the fascinating and intriguing spectacle of a myriad of revolving penises competing for attention and contemplation.

**CECILE EMMANUELLE BORRA on her 'Kaleidoscope' exhibition at Sketch**

CONTRIBUTORS: Keith Arnold, Andy Ford, Iain MacIsaac, John Samuelson, Toby Chislett, Michael Yuille.

**£10 paid for all entries**

# IN THE BACK

PUBLIC SECTOR PAY

## Auditacious!

**THERE must have been some shame-faced sniggering at the top of the Audit Commission (motto "protecting the public purse") when chief executive Steve Bundred recently argued for a pay freeze across the entire public sector.**

The commission's accounts for 2008/09 reveal that his call for noble pay restraint, made via an article in the *Observer* on 5 July, came just four weeks after he had waved through a distinctly juicy (and cynical) pay deal for himself and 24 of his most senior colleagues.

Until March this year Bundred and his co-directors were entitled to up to 10 percent of their salaries as bonuses. For 2008/09 these averaged 6.5 percent, the one-time Spartist Bundred trousering £12,000, or 6.1 percent of his £192,000 salary. But from 2009/10, the board agreed in June, bonuses will be stopped and replaced "by a one-off 6 percent consolidation into basic salary" on top of regular pay rises.

In other words, what were once discretionary payments will now be paid for ever more, regardless of performance or financial pressure. Since top public officials (such as Audit Commission fatcats) are expected to come under pressure to relinquish bonuses in the choppy fiscal waters ahead (Whitehall permanent secretaries have already waived theirs for 2008/09), this could prove a lucrative move.

Particularly smart was pitching the pay hike at 6 percent, marginally lower than recent bonuses. This allowed the chair of the remuneration committee, Raj Rajagopal, to claim a "net saving to the commission", which is an interesting view of agreeing to pay hundreds of thousands of pounds that would otherwise have been optional in tough times. And when the commission released plans for 100 job cuts at the end of June, it crowed that it "also recently announced the scrapping of directors' bonuses for 25 top managers" with no mention of the compensating pay rises.

Money would not have been so tight at the commission, which polices spending by local authorities and the health service, had it run its finances better. The 2008/09 report admits "mistakes were made in the management of its own [£10m] deposits with Icelandic banks". So far it has written off £3m of these – though the losses could rise – without the bosses' pay packets taking a hit.

Nor has the episode deterred the commission from more financial chicanery. Its 2008/09 accounts reveal that it has introduced a "salary sacrifice" scheme under which the usual pension arrangements are changed to avoid paying national insurance. Instead of staff and employer paying contributions, the employer pays them all and so reduces the employee's salary correspondingly. This "saves" national insurance costs for both or, to put it another way, deprives the public purse that the commission exists to protect (to the tune of £600,000 on its own figures). This kind of finessing isn't allowed for other public sector workers. But these days anything goes at the financially innovative Audit Commission.

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● **In the last *Eye* we said CDC had spent £1.892m on consultants in 2008, an apparent 600 percent increase on 2006 when over the same period the rest of government had cut consultancy spending. The figure for 2008 was in fact £1.223m, a mere 360 percent hike on two years before.**

DEFENCE ACCOUNTS

## You don't have to be MoD to work here...

**MINISTRY of Defence accounts, sneaked out at the end of the parliamentary term, show that the MoD is still losing hundreds of millions of pounds on two shambolic schemes highlighted by the *Eye*.**

Chaos still reigns at the Defence Storage and Distribution Agency (DSDA), for example, where "particularly high discrepancies" were largely responsible for the National Audit Office refusing to vouch for the accounting for £6bn worth of equipment – including £155m worth of Bowman radios whose whereabouts are unknown.

As *Eye* 1238 explained, DSDA has been hurtling towards privatisation since 2006 under chief executive Neil Firth, who has boasted of closing warehouses, notably at Stafford, and cutting 2,000 jobs "two years ahead of schedule". This wasn't too clever, it turns out: as the NAO notes: "Stores were not checked on leaving Stafford." Much of the equipment then had to be shipped to Germany simply because there was no space to store it in Britain once the warehouses had been shut so hastily.

As an insider tells the *Eye*: "Previously understood stores and logistics practices such as stocktaking and checking deliveries against orders were abandoned in the rush to close sites, make staff redundant – whilst, of course, continuing to deliver operational support on a massive scale to Iraq and Afghanistan."

The NAO highlights slapdash inventory and accounting procedures, as well as a number of Spanish practices such as "unexplained adjustments made to inventory" and, er, "reallocation of ownership of inventory items to owners who were unfamiliar with the stock".

Despite this shambles, the government and DSDA seem intent on more of the same. Firth, recruited from the private sector courier firm UPS, laments having "reached the limits of returns available from this business model", while Treasury adviser Gerry Grimstone's "operational efficiency review" of Whitehall wants even greater commercialisation at DSDA.

Elsewhere in the MoD empire, meanwhile, the unified forces payroll system designed by pisspoor IT firm EDS is still causing havoc three years after it began. Last year the system made overpayments of £204m to some personnel while underpaying others by £64m.

As the NAO concludes: "Several step changes are still required before the end-to-end military pay process including JPA can be considered fit for purpose." In English, that means the EDS system is still… rubbish.

SCOTTISH PRISON SERVICE

## Quay questions

**THE family of a young man whose body was pulled from Wick Harbour in February 1997 is still trying to find out if a man who was dismissed as a suspect in the murder inquiry because he was in jail was, in fact, on weekend release at the time.**

Kevin McLeod was 24 when he died after a night out, in what his family believes was a violent murder. At the time, the Northern Constabulary's investigation concluded that the young electrician had tripped and fallen on to one of the bollards on the quayside, receiving severe internal injuries, before tumbling into the harbour. A fatal accident inquiry recorded an open verdict on Kevin's death.

Some time later the family received information that a man had been seen having an altercation with Kevin earlier in the evening. Police promised to investigate but a detective told the McLeods that the man in question had a solid alibi – he was a serving prisoner in Porterfield Prison when Kevin died. However, the family was then tipped-off that the man had been out of prison that weekend on temporary release.

Kevin's uncle, Allan McLeod, has been trying to get an answer out of the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) ever since; but it has refused to clear up the question of whether the prisoner was on weekend release or not. At first it simply denied even having the information; but in 2007 the Scottish information commissioner found that the SPS did hold "some relevant information" – but it couldn't be disclosed under freedom of information because of data protection laws as it was "sensitive personal data". This claim was inconsistent, to say the least, as the SPS had already given Mr McLeod the prisoner's final release date – data that was surely equally personal.

MSP Jamie Stone recently placed a written question challenging the refusal, but Scottish justice secretary Kenny MacAskill has flatly refused to answer. Stone said he was "mystified and irritated by the attitude" of the SPS and he plans to challenge the freedom of information ruling in the European court of justice and human rights if necessary.

Meanwhile the prisoner in question has been released and, the family understands, has left the country and emigrated to Thailand. That is no reason to stop pursuing the truth, they say.

Allan McLeod says the case has "been a dog's breakfast" since the beginning. The Northern Constabulary's deputy chief constable Keith Cullen escaped a disciplinary hearing over the handling of the case in 2003, retiring days before it was due to take place. Then a report by the police complaints commissioner for Scotland condemned the handling of the family's complaints and in 2007 the family finally received an apology from the board of the Northern Constabulary.

But what the family really wants is answers.

TAX COLLECTION

## iQor blimey

**IN WHAT is fast becoming a model for public service reform, HM Revenue and Customs' reaction to rising debt levels (up to £28bn this year, with £11bn considered "doubtful") is to cut tax collectors' jobs and pay private debt collectors instead.**

Last month HMRC launched a "pilot" scheme using US outfit iQor (a corruption of Ichor, the blood of the Greek gods, for some reason), whose Intellirisk and Allied Interstate operations in the US have attracted controversy.

Debt collection is big business over here too and could prove very profitable for iQor, so the firm will no doubt be on its best behaviour for six months. In return it will retain 25 percent of tax debts collected, many of which should not be too troublesome since HMRC is incapable of recovering them only because it has cut too many tax collectors' jobs (around 1,000 so far) under Gordon Brown's "efficiency" programme.

Happily for iQor and its private equity owner Guggenheim Partners, its own tax bills shouldn't be a problem. Evoking memories of the sale of the Revenue's offices to Bermuda-incorporated Mapeley (*Eyes passim ad nauseam*), iQor and Guggenheim are registered in the United States' very own tax haven of Delaware, despite their HQ being in New York.

MAN IN THE EYE

JONATHAN POWELL

# Going for gold

**TONY BLAIR's former chief-of-staff Jonathan Powell, who wrote an eyewitness account of the Northern Ireland peace process called *Great Hatred, Little Room*, has a new job that will require all his powers of diplomacy and persuasion.**

For Powell is lobbying on behalf of a New York-based investor in an attempt to restart a massive (and massively unpopular) Romanian gold mining project which opponents say will force people from their homes, destroy unique archaeological sites… and could cause widespread cyanide pollution. Nice.

Powell is backing Gabriel Resources, which wants to mine for gold in the Transylvanian mountain village of Rosia Montana ("Red Creek"). The company was founded in 1997 by Australian-Romanian investor Frank Timis; and controversy grew when Timis was forced to admit to having convictions for drug dealing and heroin possession in Australia. Though he stepped down from the board, villagers and NGOs still opposed the massive open cast mine, worried that it would generate millions of tons of cyanide-poisoned waste.

In addition, many of the locals don't want to be relocated from their homes and farms. And nor do they want to see burial grounds dug up, historic churches destroyed or an archeological site blown up. Support for the anti-mine campaign, Alburnus Maior, goes far beyond Rosia Montana, with many Romanians suspicious of foreign investors grabbing Romanian resources, schmoozing local politicians and tearing up traditional hamlets.

As president Adrian Nastase put it back in 2004: "Regarding the claim that the Rosia Montana mining development will save Romania from poverty, this is but a fairy tale. They will take the gold and leave the cyanide."

Powell joined the prospectors when New York-based millionaire and mining investor Thomas Kaplan bought a large share of Gabriel Resources last year. He hired Powell via a web of anonymous companies, making him a "senior adviser" in February to a British company he had set up called "Tigris Financial". Kaplan disguised his control of Tigris through a complicated ownership structure, and neither Tigris, Kaplan, nor Powell's office would say what Tigris actually does. However, *Private Eye* has established that Kaplan is using Powell to push his Romanian gold mine by ignoring the local opponents and instead lobbying those who fund them.

The popular anti-mine campaign has attracted support from churches, the Romanian Academy and Romania's royal family. But campaigners have also launched legal actions funded by international foundations. It is these bodies whom Powell is approaching in an attempt to put them off the campaign.

His pitch is apparently that now that he is involved, the mine will be clean 'n' green, so the NGOs and campaigners should support it and ignore the negative "minority".

In Britain, Powell would be handicapped by his close association with too many dodgy Iraq dossiers; but his other current role as a "senior adviser" to his former boss's current business, Tony Blair Associates, may well appear glamorous enough abroad to help open doors for him at the top of Romanian politics, should this be necessary to help Kaplan launch his mine.

PS: This isn't the first time Powell has been involved in helping western businessmen in Romania. He was of course by Tony's side when Blair controversially urged President Nastase to sell his country's steel mills to Labour party donor Lakshmi Mittal.

PFI

# Burning question

**THE private finance initiative (PFI) may gobble up public money, but it can't stand public scrutiny. That seems to be the message from the French-owned waste firm Veolia Environmental, which took out an injunction to stop its partner council revealing details of an £800m waste and incinerator deal.**

Last year Veolia signed a 27-year PFI contract to run waste services for Nottinghamshire county council. The latter's website says Veolia is known for its "expertise, excellence in service, and for working in partnership with clients" but makes no mention of injunctions.

As part of its general audit, the council makes its accounts and bills available to voters. But when local resident Shlomo Dowen, coordinator for People Against Incinerators (PAIN), asked to see Veolia's invoices to gauge how good a deal the council had negotiated, Veolia won an emergency injunction to keep the books closed – even though the council was only following Audit Commission guidelines. Because of the legal process, Nottinghamshire would make only limited comment to *Private Eye*, but it appears to be contesting the injunction.

Is Veolia reluctant to open the books because, as campaigners say, the PFI deal is, ahem, somewhat less than perfect? Central to it is a huge incinerator in the middle of Sherwood Forest, contrary to the business plan which proposed the incinerator should be on a brownfield site. Instead, it is being built among the trees at a former mine that is meant to be reclaimed as greenfield land, not turned into a big burning plant.

Veolia's case for the incinerator seems to be based on assumptions that "the quantity of waste produced has the potential to double over the next 20 years." But annual waste in the area is stable at around 400,000 tonnes, suggesting Nottinghamshire might have bought hundreds of millions of pounds worth of waste disposal it doesn't need. The scheme has already been called in for an independent inquiry, and critics say Veolia is also being obstructive about providing figures to the inspector.

If the deal has wasted public money, there could be national implications. The government's semi–privatised PFI lobby organisation Partnerships UK, along with Defra, both helped draw up the scheme.

Veolia's injunction will be subject to judicial review in late August or September to give the Audit Commission a chance to make its views known.

FORENSIC SCIENCE

# Usual suspects

**ALTHOUGH 800 staff at the soon to be "transformed" Forensic Science Service face the chop, there's still oodles of cash available to pay consultants.**

Home Office minister Alan Campbell recently told Labour MP John McDonnell that £1.5m had been paid to Deloitte in 2008 to help with "preliminary thinking on business transformation". Even at Deloitte's rates, that's more than 1,000 consultant-days, suggesting a lot of early chin-rubbing.

There were also "a number of agency and interim specialists", said Campbell, who had worked alongside and trained in-house staff. And that was without the "transformation" programme being rebranded as the meaningless "Win4change".

The "transformation" will see 40 percent of staff laid off prior to privatisation in pursuit of a forensic science market nobody wants (*Eye* 1239). Naturally, unions are furious; so FSS boss Bill Griffiths, a former Unilever executive, has set up an "employee forum" that will cause far less trouble.

The employee forum is the brainchild of interim human resources director Nik Jones, whose qualification for the post seems to be the time he spent in human resources at Cable & Wireless in 2007 when it was resisting recognition of the Communications Workers Union.

Jones's then boss was Simon Broome, who brought in a firm of union busters, The Burke Group, that the government's own central arbitration committee says "has an unfortunate track record". Broome is now at the FSS too as a consultant in charge of "people and culture".

Though you might have thought forensic science an essential element in Britain's criminal justice system, it's being overhauled with the kind of secrecy more often associated with a private corporate finance deal – which it may well become. The government, for example, has put one of the directors of its Shareholder Executive, Mark Boyle, on the board. Boyle was recruited from catering group Compass, where "he led the significant mergers and acquisitions activity".

And when Labour MP Lindsay Hoyle, whose Chorley constituency contains a threatened forensic lab, asked for the FSS business plan, Home Office minister Campbell refused on the grounds of "commercial sensitivity".

PATIENTLINE

# RIP-off

**PISSPOOR and bust hospital bedside phone company Patientline died an unlamented death last week.**

It will be taken over by a new company owned by creditors, including the partly state-owned Royal Bank of Scotland. Which is a very expensive way of returning the basic service of a telephone for hospital patients to the taxpayer.

Patientline's services were such a rip-off (see *Eyes passim*) that rules had to be introduced to prevent calls going on too long, as one hospitalised *Eye* reader discovered last month while trying to resolve a disability benefit claim from his hospital bed. After arguing over an official error, then being put on hold awaiting a supervisor, with blood pressure rising dangerously he watched the following message flash up on his Patientline screen…

Aaarrrggghhhh…

GOBBLEDEGOOK

# Stupid letter of the week

**THE last *Eye* asked whether any readers had received worse business letters than the misspelled hotchpotch sent by the Halifax to John Oliver. And indeed they had.**

After wrangling with BT customer services last year, Adam Kimmel was promised that a proper apology would be sent to his mother, who was cut off in error when transferring an account into her name after her husband died. Instead, the masterpiece of copy and pasting that arrived in the post read:

*"Dear Sir/Madam,*

*customer lost her husband and while trying to sort out his furaral she was disconnected mor than four times she has been to a number of times that she would get a rebate that she has not recived and customer is very upset at all the people t*

*Yours faithfully,*

*British Telecom Plc"*

Can anyone do worse than this?

MOTORBIKE TESTS

# Crash course

**MOTORCYCLE instructors and examiners think it can only be a matter of time before someone is seriously injured or killed during a new driving test for bikers.**

The Driving Standards Agency quango is making a dangerous and expensive hash of introducing the preposterous new test. Until 30 March there was just one practical motorbike test – half an hour out on the roads which, along with the two theory tests and the compulsory basic training test, was deemed more than sufficient.

Then came the Second European Driving Licence Directive (aka the 2DLD). Now instead of one practical test, there are two – modules one and two. In the five-minute module one, apart from the usual weaving in and out of traffic cones, riders are now required to accelerate to a minimum speed of 50kmh (32mph) before swerving around an obstacle and making an emergency stop. Not surprisingly, there have already been some near misses and minor accidents.

It slowly dawned on the DSA that at 32mph, the 2DLD swerve test would be breaking the 30mph speed limit in force in nearly all the residential areas where the test would be held. So it is now buying land and building new "multi-purpose test centres" at a cost of £71m.

Inept DSA chief executive Rosemary Thew boasts that the new test will make the roads safer by making it more difficult to get a full licence. But that seems unlikely. Not only are riders more likely to be killed or injured during the test itself, but there is evidence that more young tearaways and foreign dispatch riders are taking to the roads unlicensed – and therefore uninsured – rather than submit to the rigmarole of passing five tests to get a licence.

Of course in 2013, the forthcoming 3DLD will mean learners will lose their right to ride unaccompanied and perfectly safely on bikes of 125cc and under. Perhaps only then, the DSA will have fulfilled its ultimate secret objective – roads free of motorbikes, and unused "multi-purpose test centres".

HEATING IMPROVEMENTS

# Cold comfort

**THE government-funded Warm Front scheme, meant to subsidise home heating improvements, has finally been slammed by the public accounts committee (PAC) more than 18 months after the *Eye* revealed how it left pensioners shivering.**

Last year Eyes 1201 and 1202 reported the long, cold delays faced by vulnerable people when eaga plc, the company running the scheme for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), couldn't find enough engineers to do the work.

As the grants could only be used with eaga, this left people on long waiting lists. One elderly couple who had been assessed for a grant back in May 2007, spent the following Christmas with just a single electric heater in their living room. Several MPs questioned the wisdom of eaga's monopoly, when the work could be done more promptly, and often for a better price, by qualified local contractors.

MPs on the PAC also concluded that not only were three quarters of the homes helped by the scheme so far not in fuel poverty, but that more than half of all the households that are actually suffering from fuel poverty are excluded from the scheme by the grant criteria.

RESEARCH

# Upland downsized

**A LACK of government funds has led to the closure of a unique upland farming research centre in west Wales.**

Bronydd Mawr was part of the national Institute for Grassland and Environmental Research (IGER) until last year, when IGER was disbanded by the government after years of cutbacks to agricultural research (*Eye* 1157). The institute's facilities in Wales were taken over by Aberystwyth University and were thought to have been saved, but the university hasn't been given any additional funds by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) to keep the 26-year-old Bronydd Mawr going.

Eight scientists will lose their jobs and many others will be unable to use Bronydd Mawr in their research. Mick Fothergill, the local rep for scientists' union Prospect, said that closing Bronydd Mawr would mean a "unique resource" would be lost.

In May, an independent report into land-based research described Bronydd Mawr as making a "high contribution to the UK's capabilities in sustainable agriculture". However, the report warned that many of the UK's world-class agricultural research facilities were under threat because of the way they were funded. How true.

When the *Eye* asked the BBSRC why no extra money was made available for the farm, it said payments to Aberystwyth "have not reduced" since the transfer of IGER – with no explanation of how the university was meant to fund extra facilities with no extra money. Bronydd Mawr will close in October when the lease is up, and the Crown Estate has already put the 568 acres of land on the market.

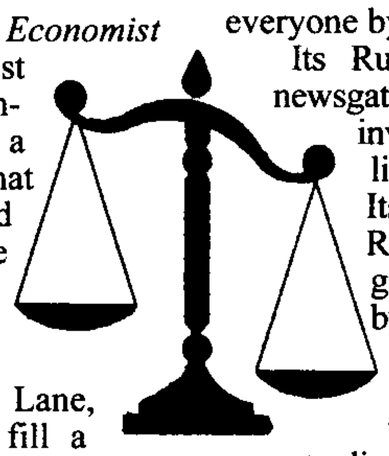
● SHIP AHOY! Just four months after the government stopped the order for a replacement for the knackered 47-year-old research ship the RRS Discovery because of the rocketing cost of euros (see *Eye 1234*), firms have been invited to bid for a new contract from September.

# COURT SHORT

**LEGAL hacks gathered at the Royal Courts of Justice on 28 July for what promised to be one of the biggest libel cases in years. For months, rumour-mongers had been muttering that Schillings, the Russian oligarchy's favourite English law firm, was going to sting the *Economist* for extraordinary damages.**

Envious lawyers predicted that Schillings partners would be buying yachts on the back of their monster claim on behalf of the oil tycoon Gennady Timchenko. Nervous journalists whispered that the Russians could close the *Economist*.

As events turned out, it wasn't the *Economist* that closed but Timchenko's case against it, which barely lasted a morning. Timchenko's lawyers first asked for a postponement and then announced that they had reached a settlement. Bemused onlookers jumped out of the way as the *Economist*'s normally strait-laced journalists charged like a herd of crazed wildebeest out of the court to the Chez Gerard bistro on Chancery Lane, and downed enough champagne to fill a Siberian oil pipeline.



Although the settlement dictates that all sides must remain silent, it is easy to infer that the truth behind the riotous celebrations was that the *Economist* had seen off the most determined effort yet by the Russian super-rich to exploit England's authoritarian libel laws.

On 27 November last year, the *Economist* ran a special feature on corruption in Putin's Russia, which now consumes $300bn a year, "equivalent to 20 percent of Russia's GDP". The ex-KGB men who misrule the wretched country would, it said, "nationalise" businesses and spirit their assets into foreign bank accounts if businesses did not pay them off.

In the report, the *Economist* mentioned Timchenko, who began his career as a Soviet-era manager of a state-owned oil-trading firm and became one of the main shareholders of its successor, Gunvor, after the fall of communism.

Timchenko hired Schillings, which had recently profited from an absurd example of libel tourism when it persuaded the English courts to allow the Ukrainian oligarch Rinat Akhmetov to sue the *Kiev Post* in London, even though it had barely 100 British subscribers, and the Ukrainian *Obozrevatel* website, which does not even publish in English.

The *Economist* had put Timchenko's name under the headline "Grease my palm – bribery and corruption are endemic in Russia", and that was more than enough for Schillings to say the magazine was accusing its client of corruption.

To make matters worse, although the law lords have made a nod in the direction of the freedoms of speech enshrined in American libel law and the human rights act, by allowing journalists honestly investigating matters of public importance a measure of legal immunity under the so-called "Reynolds Defence", Mr Justice Eady has, inevitably, emasculated their ruling.

Like virtually every other publication, the *Economist* could not use the defence. It duly cut references to Timchenko from the online version of the article and appended a note saying the piece was "the subject of a legal complaint by Gennady Timchenko and Gunvor". But then it surprised everyone by refusing to pay up and apologise.

Its Russian correspondents were taken off newsgathering, as the *Economist* threw all its investigative resources into defending a libel claim that threatened to bankrupt it. Its efforts were closely followed by Russia-watchers inside and outside government who have long been intrigued by the multi-billionaire Timchenko, now a Finnish citizen. He vigorously and expensively contests any suggestion that his company's remarkable success in trading Russian oil has anything to do with Kremlin connections.

The *Wall Street Journal* and others found no evidence of illegality, though they have also noted that Gunvor's ultimate beneficial ownership and the destination of its vast profits – the company had revenues of $70bn last year – are unclear.

The *Economist* filed a very robust defence indeed. Instead of flying into London to pick up easy money, Timchenko faced the prospect of a long fight, and the possibility that fresh revelations would be made in open court. He ran away from the confrontation.

You only had to look at the exhausted waiters carrying bottle after bottle to the *Economist*'s table to realise that the magazine had won a magnificent victory. But what of Schillings?

The day before the case began, Timchenko's private jet landed at Biggin Hill. His "people" watched the shambles in the high court. They also read the *Economist*'s long defence document lodged at the high court, and will have had to report to their master that, far from stopping investigations into his interests, the libel action had unearthed new avenues of inquiry.

All Schillings' threats and billable hours merely produced an anodyne "clarification" in the current issue of the *Economist*, which offers no apology and makes no mention of paying a penny in costs or damages. In a carefully worded statement, the *Economist* just disowns allegations it had never made.

*'Ratbiter'*

# In the City

"BE AFRAID. Be very afraid." That is the message from Hector Sants, the suddenly emboldened chief executive of the Fundamentally Supine Authority, who watched while Northern Wreck, Bradford & Bingley, HBOS, RBS and Dunfermline crashed and burned.

"There will be more people asking more questions and getting more information," assures new FSA chairman Lord Turner.

To make sure the City is indeed "very frightened" of its main regulator, the FSA has embarked on a much touted recruitment drive to add 280 extra specialist and supervisory staff. In his annual report, Sants declared that 144 supervisors and 40 specialists had been recruited by April this year to achieve the "right mix of regulatory and market experience".

But does this mean the multimillionaires of Barclays Capital and HSBC should start looking nervously over their shoulders as they rub their hands at this year's taxpayer-enabled anticipated return to bumper bonuses? Probably not, given some other numbers disclosed by the FSA under the freedom of information act.

Most of the new staff hired by the FSA in its four regulatory/supervisory divisions have been at the bottom end of the pay scale. The number of "associates" has grown from 412 in December 2007 to 567 in April this year. In comparison, the number of more highly skilled and paid "technical specialists" rose only from 20 to 23, and "managers" from 56 to 68. Both can be paid £60,000 to £98,000 a year. Not something to tempt those at Barclays Capital, where the average pay this year is running at £200,000 but the real big earners make many times that.

The majority of "associates" were indeed in the more senior ranks, but that still meant a salary range of £40,000 to £91,000 a year. And at least 203 of those "associates" are on the lower pay scales of £25,000 to a maximum £45,000. Which raises the question as to whether it is possible to find enough staff of the calibre required to take on those they have to regulate.

The recruitment figures hide another problem at the FSA – the churn in staff, as experienced officials leave for lusher pay among those they once regulated by joining compliance teams at banks, brokers and law firms specialising in regulatory work.

In the period from January 2007 to April 2009, the FSA recruited 268 new staff in its four main regulatory groups. But in that same period 190 full-time staff left, leaving a net gain of only 78. That figure has greatly improved since January 2008, with a net gain of 135. But so far this year to April, while there were 35 new entrants, seven experienced staff left.

These better figures are no doubt in part explained by the large-scale redundancies felt by the City and the reduction in vacancies. But as the banks start returning to business as usual, the attraction of job security at the FSA may decline and the poaching of gamekeepers could return. In 2006 and 2007, departures exceeded arrivals by a growing number – in 2007 by a factor of two.

"People should be very frightened of the FSA," Sants warned in March. That will be seriously tested now that Barclays and its non-state-controlled rivals see that bonus times are here again and feel confident enough to suggest that, despite the billions the taxpayer has provided to bail out the banking system, profits, pay and bonuses must reflect the "market economy" in the words of the "humbled" but still very much unreconstructed Barclays chief executive, John Varley.

THE return of big bonuses will also mean a revival in tax schemes designed to reduce or remove the tax liability. This will rise from next year to a top rate of just over 51 percent, allowing for unlimited national insurance, for those bankers who do not take themselves off to Switzerland, Dubai, Singapore or Hong Kong. And also for other high earners, such as Premier League footballers.

Tax advisers say that there is a new drive to market the type of "beneficial arrangement" that will ensure any 51 percent tax bill can be minimised.

Payments in loans via carefully refined versions of the employee benefit trust (EBT) are likely – loans have traditionally been seen as non-taxable, although HMRC is said to be looking to challenge that view. The 2005 defeat suffered by Phones4U tycoon John Caudwell in the Dextra case does not mean that loans through EBTs are necessarily dead. So long as the independence of the offshore trustees cannot be challenged and the loans are real loans with repayment dates, security and interest payments, the EBT route may still work. This is especially so for those such as football clubs who do not worry about being unable to deduct the corporation tax on profits.

This is less attractive for banks, where the choice may be to encourage their high earners to relocate abroad and commute. That would not just save the individuals tax, but would also save their employers 11 percent national insurance on those bonuses.

Much work is also being done on schemes that will attempt the age-old tax avoidance alchemy of turning income taxed at 51 percent into capital gains taxed at 18 percent or corporation tax at 28 percent. A scheme involving income being paid into private companies, which are then liquidated, and payments made out as capital is already on the HMRC radar screen. A warning shot went out last week to those marketing this particular "beneficial arrangement".

But it still seems very unlikely that bankers or other high earners will all end up paying the top rate of tax on all their bonuses. After all – only little people pay tax, not masters of the universe!

FURTHER evidence of the works of fiction that are media rich lists has been provided by the crumbling finances of the Saudi Arabian-based Saad Group, headed by Maan Abdul Wahed Al-Sanea. Only in March this year he was ranked by *Forbes* magazine as the world's 62nd richest person, with a fortune of $7bn. In June the Saudi central bank froze his bank and credit card accounts and the Saad Group confirmed it was suffering from a "short-term liquidity squeeze" as western banks shut off credit and it began selling assets, such as its shares in house builders Berkeley and HSBC. Then last month a Cayman court froze Al-Sanea's assets. Looks like *Forbes* will need to adjust that $7bn figure, and maybe even that billionaire status.

Another whose *Forbes* billionaire status is definitely at risk is London-based, Syrian-born Simon Halabi – rated as still worth $2.8bn last March and £2bn a year ago by the *Sunday Times*, making him Britain's 31st richest man. Last month Halabi family companies technically defaulted on a £1.15bn loan secured on London office properties. The *Sunday Times* wisely omitted Halabi completely from its 2009 exercise in fantasy finance.

NO RICH man may be a hero to his valet, but no rich man is ever anything but a hero in his autobiography.

Such books are always a breathless account of the unrelenting overcoming of obstacles, occasional mistakes redeemed by greater successes despite the envy and plots of those responsible for any undeserved failures.

Such a book is *Leading from the Front*, the valedictory volume on the life and lack of crimes of property man Gerald Ronson, written with his long-time friend Jeffrey Robinson. The book was serialised by another old pal, Richard Desmond, in the *Daily Express*. Both these self-seen "diamond geezers", strangely super-sensitive about their feelings if not those of others, suffer from a common severe absence of motes while seeing an endless number of beams.

Ronson's greatest beef is how he was treated over the Guinness share support scandal, which saw him jailed for a year 19 years ago this month. Ronson sees himself as the misled victim of an Establishment, anti-Semitic conspiracy that sentenced him for a crime of which he was both ignorant and innocent. He reserves his greatest bile for the trial judge, Mr Justice Henry, and his co-defendants, the Guinness chief executive Ernest Saunders and his one-time friend, stockbroker Anthony Parnes.

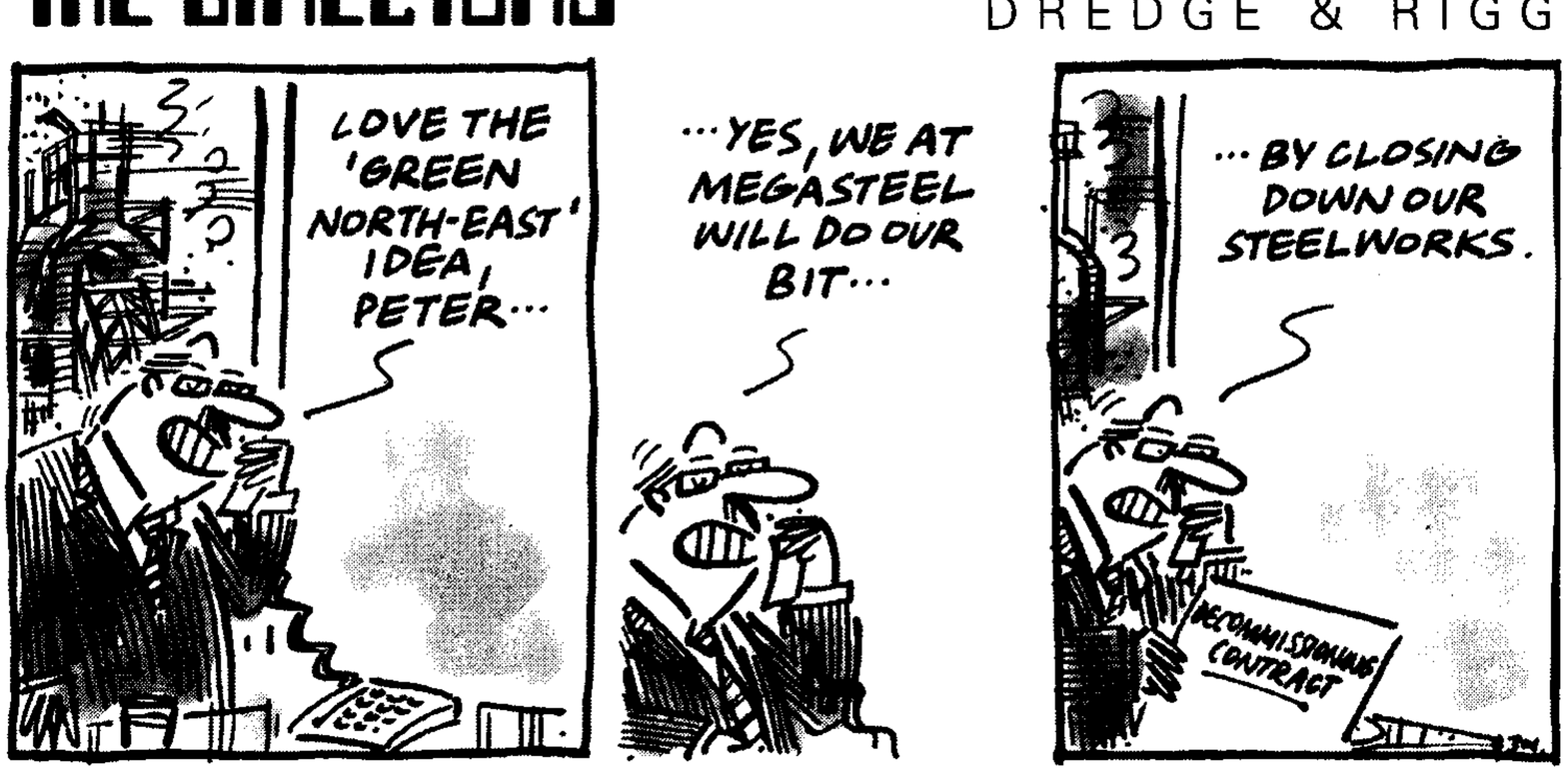
All around generous Gerald were "crooks", "liars" and "arseholes". He was the simple man of property unschooled in the stock market and City rules who was too trusting and became the victim of a "show trial" with misused or withheld evidence. "Everything was transparent." "I did not do any false accounting." "There was no personal gain." The evidence was all "bollocks." He had returned the "tainted" £5.8m his Heron companies had been paid for supporting to the tune of £25m the Guinness bid for Distillers. He had not testified because his lawyers advised he would "get angry". But still, the "disposable" Ronson was "unfairly" convicted and fined £5m, part of a legal bill of £13m.

The two government-appointed inspectors who investigated the Guinness affair would find the Ronson version somewhat at odds with their conclusions delivered long after the trial. They held that the formula for paying Heron for its secret share support – which gave a return of "120 percent pa for essentially no risk" because any losses were to be covered – had "emanated from Mr Ronson", and that both invoices paid by Guinness – which Ronson denies seeing – were either false or, in the case of the second, "entirely bogus".

Ronson was held to have known of at least the "falsity" of the first invoice for £2.5m. The £5.8m was returned to Guinness "the first business day after our first interview with Mr Ronson".

The inspectors also drew attention to a matter which sadly Ronson overlooked. Heron was also working for Guinness's rival Argyll in the battle

☛ See over...


THE DIRECTORS
LOVE THE 'GREEN NORTH-EAST' IDEA, PETER...
...YES, WE AT MEGASTEEL WILL DO OUR BIT...
DREDGE & RIGG
... BY CLOSING DOWN OUR STEELWORKS.
RECOMMISSIONING CONTRACT

for Distillers, after signing up with Saunders. "It was implicit in the deal that Mr Ronson could not bestow his favours on both camps… Yet Heron bought significant quantities of Argyll stock, particularly in the last days of the bid." Heron spent over £5m backing Argyll. The inspectors called this "shabbily opportunistic".

Another Guinness share support player who might be surprised to read the Ronson version is fellow jailbird and former Wall Street insider trader Ivan Boesky, whose admissions when caught by the American authorities blew the whistle on Guinness. "I admit… that I was the one who gave [Saunders et al] Boesky's phone number… As it happened I had his number… not that I was his big buddy," Ronson recalls.

Boesky did not give evidence at the Guinness trial, but he was interviewed by Scotland Yard in 1987. Notes of this interview state that Boesky told the police: "I received a telephone call from Gerald Ronson… he requested me to communicate with Guinness… Ronson outlined the protection notion and that we could make money." Boesky's lawyers had told the police that he "had not dealt with Guinness before and did not know them and was content to rely on Ronson's assurance of their honouring the arrangements… Ronson in effect vouched for Guinness and said he had a similar deal with them."

Boesky, they said, had "kept Gerald Ronson informed on a weekly basis of his positions in various UK securities and vice versa. Ronson kept Boesky informed of his investments." Boesky told Scotland Yard: "Ronson would say, 'I am buying this stock or that stock, I suggest that you buy it if you want to'." This was perhaps not surprising, as Ronson was an investor in Boesky's limited partnership investment fund, which Guinness subsequently joined.

Sadly, there was not enough room in the Ronson memoir to mention that investment, or another relevant deal which attracted the government inspectors – Heron's purchase of shares in the distillers Bell's when it was the target of a takeover bid from Guinness in 1985, the year before the Distillers battle. City ingénue Ronson had been advised in that deal by Tony Parnes – as he had on two other deals which are mentioned in the book: the unsuccessful bids for United Drapery Stores and Debenhams. Given his role in Bell's, the inspectors considered it "quite natural that Mr Ronson should be approached for support when Guinness launched its bid for Distillers". Ronson told the inspectors he did not recall discussing Bell's with Guinness or Parnes.

But this was all a very long time ago, so it is understandable that memories of events can fade, especially for a very busy man who left so much to others he trusted. To his credit, Ronson went on to rebuild his property empire, and he assures readers: "It's no good whingeing," while insisting: "I am not bitter." Which is obviously so.

*'Slicker'*

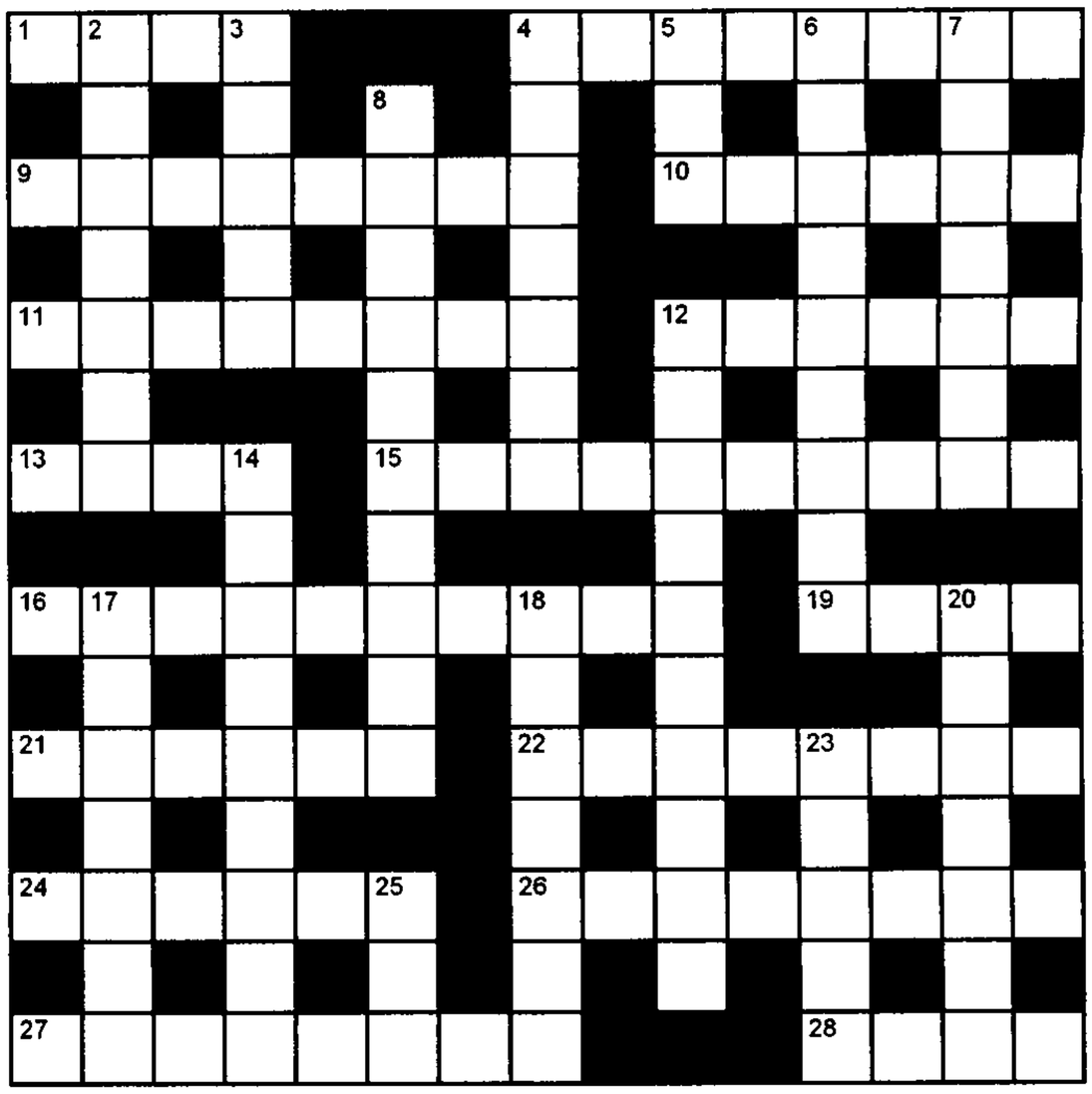
## JUST FANCY THAT!

**CITY lawyer Gill Switalski is likely to collect a record £12m in compensation after successfully claiming at a tribunal that she endured a long campaign of sexual harassment and discrimination by two colleagues at F&C Asset Management, company secretary Marrack Tonkin and HR director Peter Cole.**

Now here's a coincidence. One of the biggest payouts before this case was that to Julia Bower of Shroder Securities, who was given a £25,000 bonus payment in 1998 but later discovered that two comparable male colleagues had pocketed £650,000 and £440,000. The tribunal awarded her £1.4m and condemned the company's "laddish and sexist" culture. Who was the HR director of Shroders when all this was going on? Step forward the same Peter Cole. Might chemical castration be in order?

# EYE CROSSWORD 397

by Cyclops



**£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 14 August 2009**

**Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN or via email to crossword@private-eye.co.uk**

**ACROSS**

1 Luvvie-like National player hogging musical's lead (4)
4 Conservative arse preferred by parliamentary candidate? (4,4)
9 Very ring in which suitor screwed master (8)
10 Hostess offers messy shag, without that is, withdrawing (6)
11/8 What the British electorate desperately needs? Could result in "Morgan event" (not 'A') (6,2,10)
12 Labour leader has frothy latte (first entry of expenses!) (6)
13 See 28ac.
15 Hooker ran out holding tip of todger – what a state! (5,5)
16 Darling opportunity to have a shag in retirement (10)
19 Figure Brenda should be ditched – no feeling (4)
21 Brown: "Have to go, seat precarious" – tit! (6)
22 Sex on cue: flopping is unpardonable (2,6)
24 Maybe Loach's aloof (6)
26 Idle parasite, Darling, lacking will ultimately (4,4)
27 Over-sensitive, the French, dipping into pisspoor garlic (8)
28/13 Rat's variety act put on film (8)

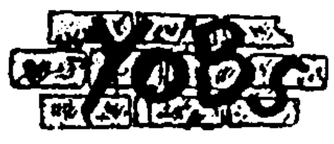
**DOWN**

2 Ejaculatory sound that gets you blessed? (7)
3 Lay one on Brown, finally an ex-leader (5)
4 Teaser showing peak of sizeable chest (7)
5/25 Gay's mate needs puff before uninitiated bonk (3,3)
6 Drama as (making a comeback) Jack taken to heart by stricken nation (5,4)
7 Sporting type, Heath, unmanned, allowed at Maggie's end (7)
8 See 11ac.
12 Archer on? Be prepared for disgust (10)
14 Provisional number associated with Brown? Rubbish, Cyclops has possession (9)
17 Unhealthy as hard to get amount of blood nearly given by Hancock (7)
18 Nautical mishap (one's lost nuts) (7)
20 Rubber pack on Paris street upended (7)
23 Influence and power? Clegg at first gets left out! (5)
25 See 5dn.

**Crossword 396 winner: JOHN PERRINS**

ACROSS: 7 Plinth 8 Panorama 10 Second homes 11 Kid 12/24 Brown ale 14 Take after 16 Outwit 18 Rake in 21 Eye-opener 23 Dumpy 26 Premiership 28 Numerous 29 Scenic.

DOWN: 1 Disclosure 2 Stan 3 Lawmaker 4 Gobsmacked 5/9 Jack shit 6 Waldorf 7 Pass by 13 Newspapers 15 Triumphant 17 Tanked up 19 Remains 20 Myopic 22 Ruin 25 Emma 27 Racy.



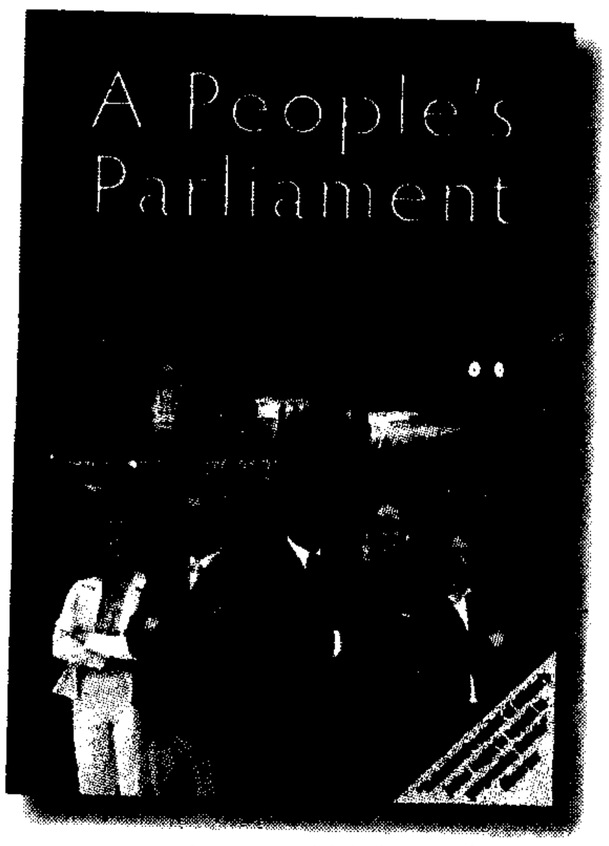

HUSBAND

## A People's Parliament

The Iraq War, banking crisis and MPs' expenses row has brought public confidence in politics to an all-time low. The parliamentary system requires voters to trust the judgment and probity of their representatives and it's hard to see how this faith could be restored.

Perhaps it's time to question the archaic notion of 'parliamentary representation' – the product of a time of mass illiteracy when the only way to hold the executive to account was to appoint a 'representative', put him on his horse, and send him off to parley with the king.

In his groundbreaking new book *A People's Parliament*, **Keith Sutherland** revives the ancient Athenian system of representation (random selection by lot) as part of a practical blueprint for twenty-first-century governance. In Sutherland's model a jury of citizens – similar to trial juries but larger – scrutinises the political process by listening to informed debate and voting on the outcome. This method works for jury trials, so why not in the high court of parliament?




'Sutherland's model of citizen's juries ought to have much greater appeal to progressive Britain.' **Tim Luckhurst,** *Observer*

'A political essay in the best tradition.' **Barbara Goodwin,** *Contemporary Political Theory*

'Raises important issues for the future of our democracy.' **Vernon Bogdanor**, *TLS*

'Well-presented and argued … the use of the lot in the ways discussed in this book merits more careful consideration than it has received to date.' **Andrew Blick,** *Political Quarterly*

**350 pp., ISBN 9781845401-085, £14.95 (pbk.); -382 £30 (cloth)**

## The Athenian Option

In 1998 **Anthony Barnett** and **Peter Carty** developed the idea of selecting part of a new upper house by lot: creating a jury or juries to represent the population as a whole. This new edition includes an account of the reception of the idea, and a response to the advances in citizen-based deliberation that have taken place since the mid-1990s. It concludes with a new appeal to adopt their approach as efforts to reform the Lords continue.

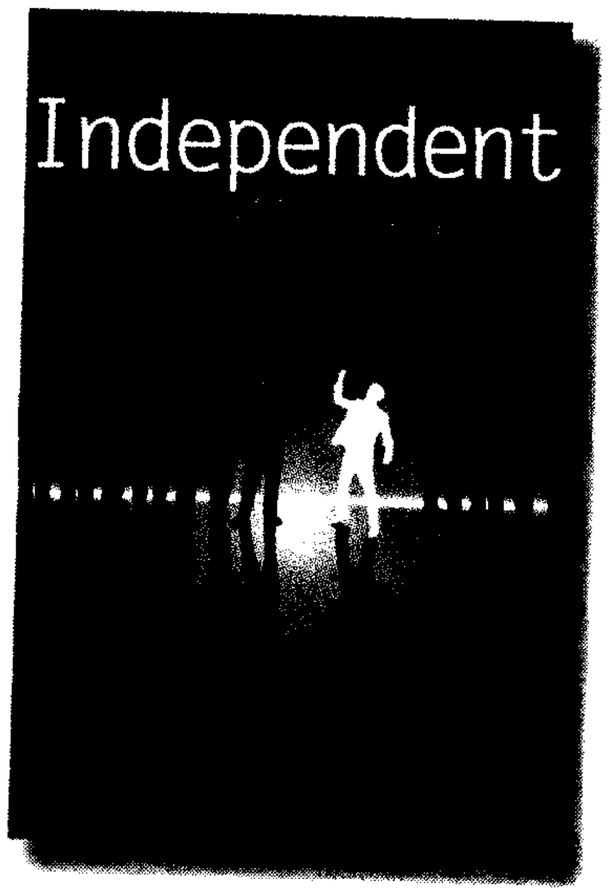
'Recommended to anyone with an interest in democratic governance.' *Political Quarterly*

'This book is a sign that the public philosophy which has for so long governed our political arrangements has become outworn.' **Vernon Bogdanor,** *TLS*

**120 pp., ISBN 9781845401399, £8.95 (pbk.); 9781845401405 £25 (cloth)**

## Independent

The major parties no longer have a clear identity and appear to make up policy primarily in order to embarrass their opponents. So why not let independent MPs have a go? Martin Bell and Richard Taylor have shown that independents are not just for local government and Paul Judge's Jury Team made a reasonable debut at the European election. In this new book **Richard Berry** explores the role of independents in both local and national government.

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Detail of Raphael's *The School of Athens*, 19th century lithograph (adapted).

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*If you'd like to know more about the Ancient Greek Philosophy cruise, please call 020 8742 3355. Alternatively, visit* ***www.martinrandall.com/philosophy***

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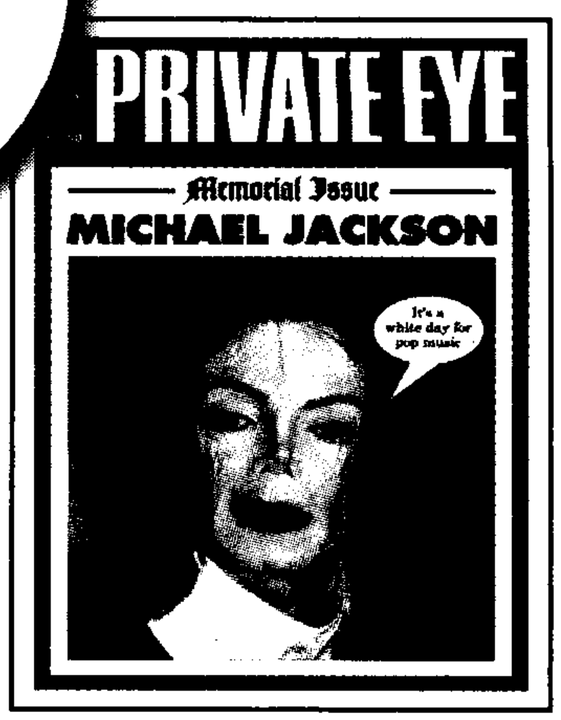

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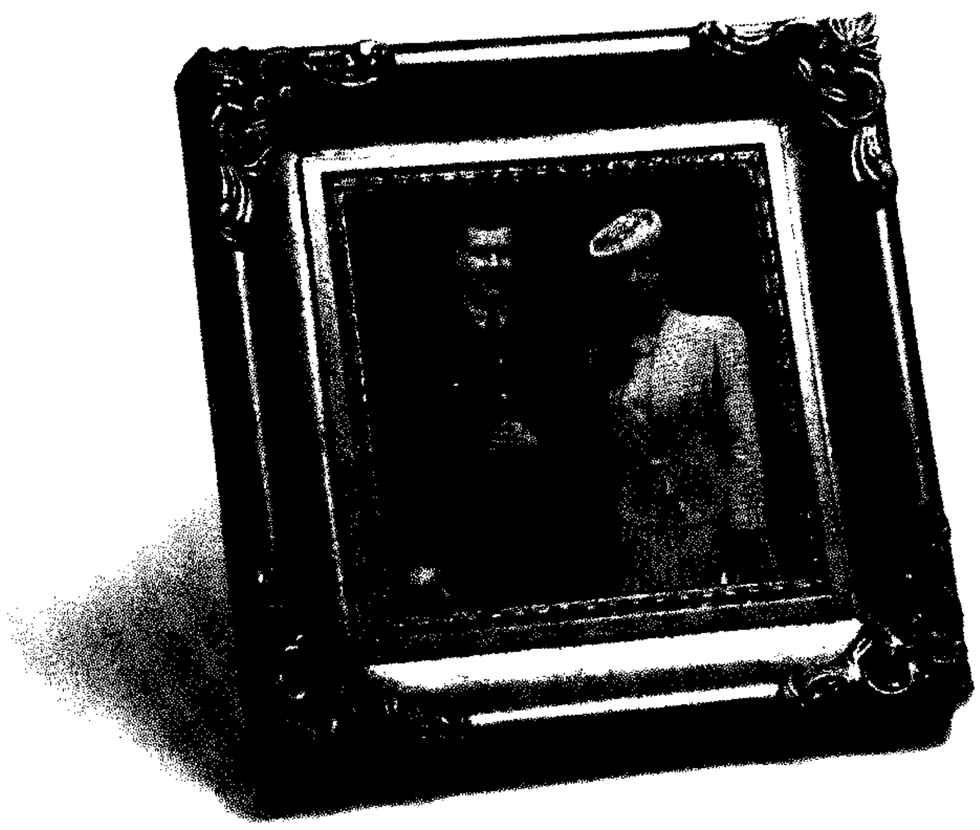

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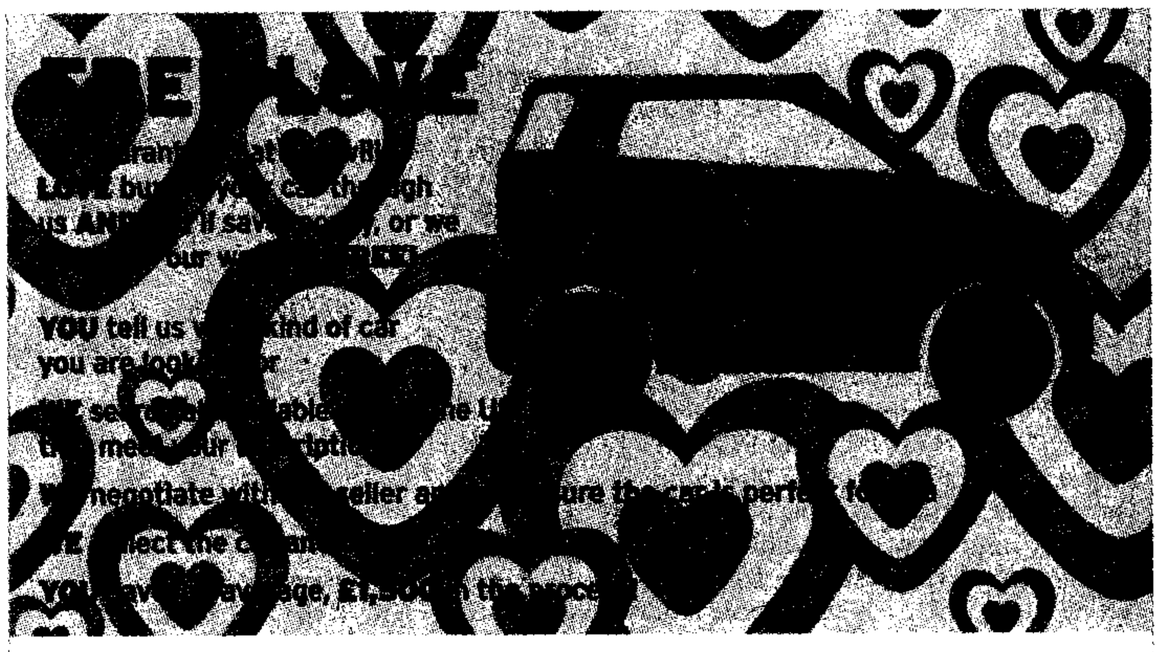

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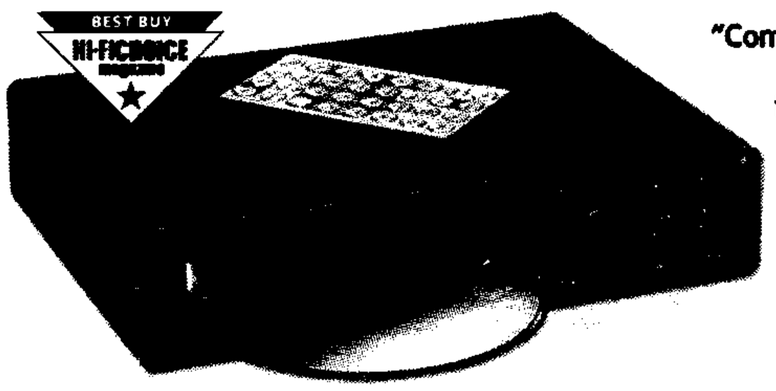


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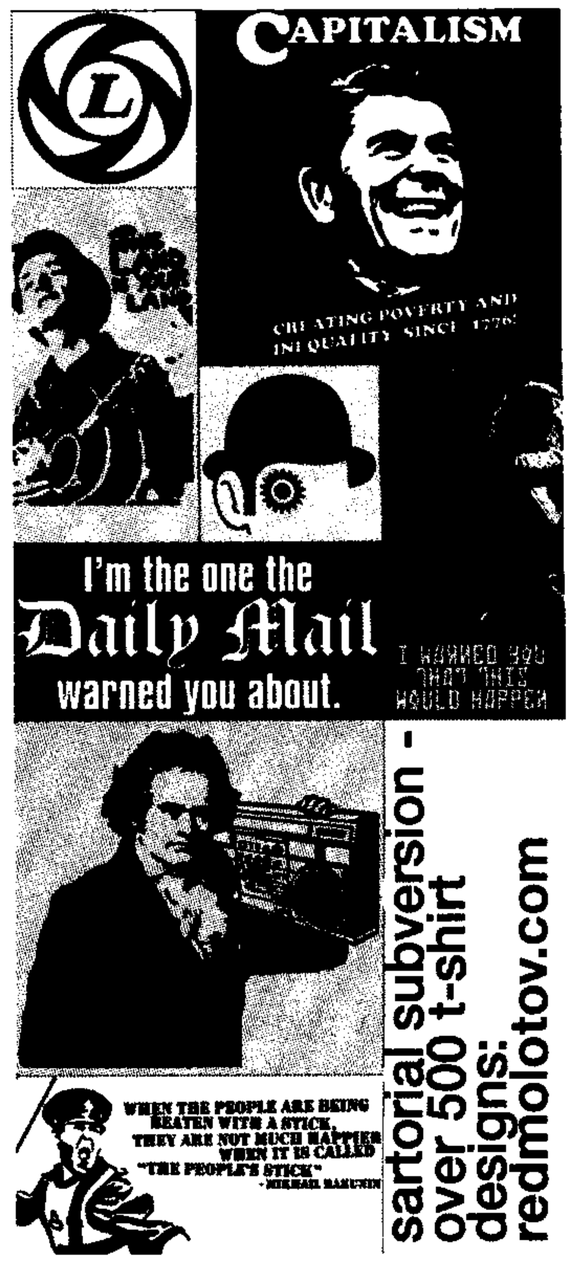
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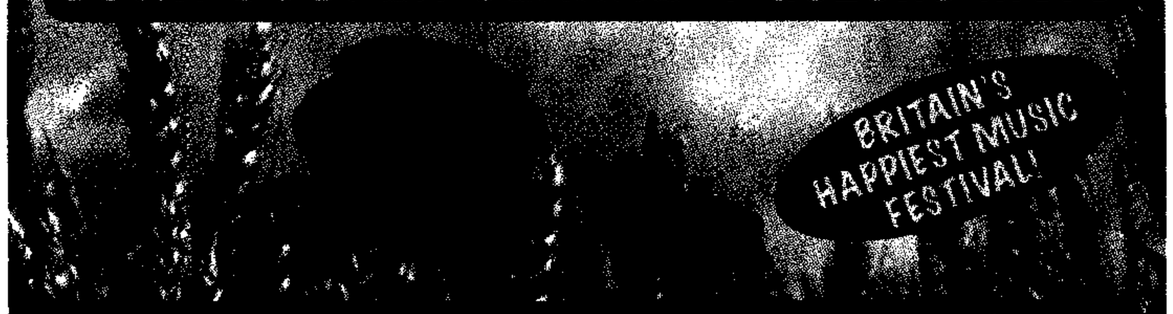


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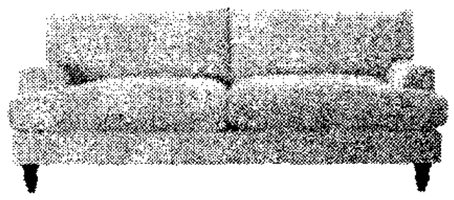

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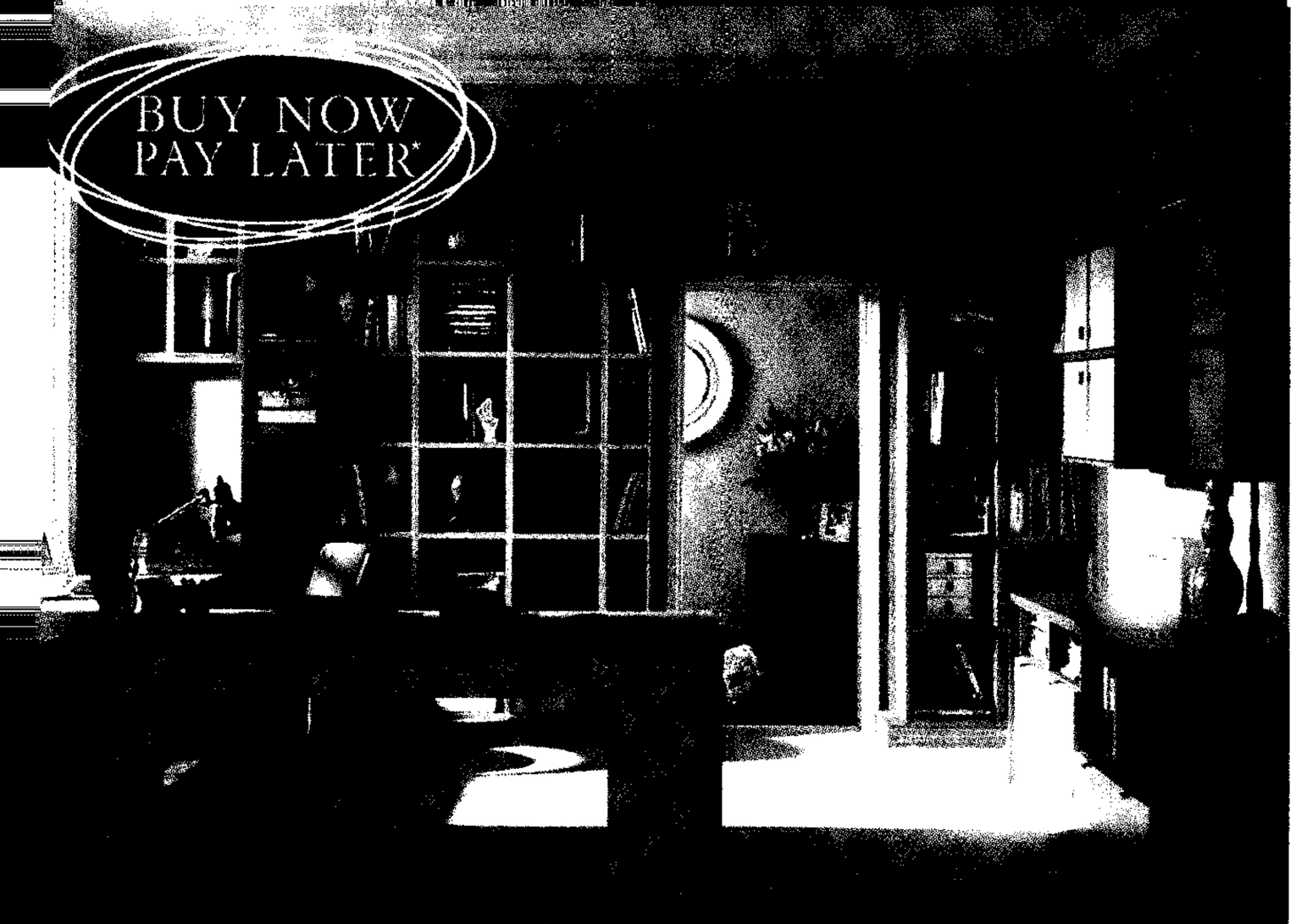


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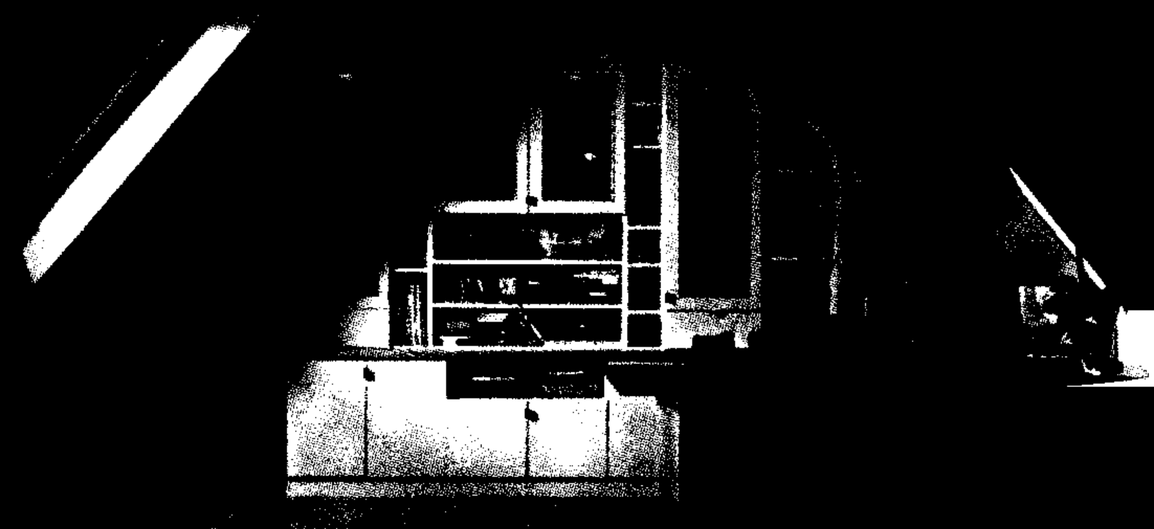

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